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By H. E. WORTHAM

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THREE WOMEN

MUSTAPHA KEMAL OF TURKEY





*Sir Arthur S. Cope, R.A.*

KING EDWARD VII  
IN THE ROBES OF THE ORDER OF THE GARTER  
1908

# EDWARD VII MAN AND KING

BY

H. E. WORTHAM



*Le métier du Roi est grand, noble et délicieux.* — LOUIS XIV

*Mon métier à moi est d'être Roi.* — KING EDWARD VII

BOSTON  
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY

1931

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**ADMIRATIONE, FIDELITATE, HUMILITATE**





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## **EDWARD VII, MAN AND KING**



# I

## THE MASTER-KING

THERE is a picture of King Edward VII at a Council that may serve as the vignette for a book of which he and his kingship are the theme.

Lord Justice Farwell was introduced to take the oath. When he found himself in the royal presence, before the King in his Council, the august environment was too much for this elderly and eminent man of the law. The promptings he had received from Sir Almeric Fitzroy were forgotten and the awe of majesty overcame him, as it did the "great clerks" whom Shakespeare noticed to "shiver and look pale" before Queen Elizabeth. He blundered through the ceremony and tried the patience of the King, restless under ill health and choleric in virtue of his office. Afterwards Sir Almeric Fitzroy showed His Majesty the instructions he circulated as Clerk to the Privy Council to those about to be sworn. They were clear enough and the King could only comment: "But they lose their heads. It is very amusing."

This feeling of awe for the kingly office did not cause all men to stammer in King Edward's presence. But however subtle the technique at his Court, however easy the intercourse between the King and his friends, the one always remained the sovereign, the others his subjects. Even a privileged person like Lord Fisher, combining the functions which centuries before would have been divided between the Lord Admiral and the Court jester, only forgot himself and committed some outrageous solecism, one is inclined to think, in order to heighten the contrast between the

reactions of his ruthless and authoritarian temperament towards the King and towards the rest of the world. When the royal anger threatened to blow him sky-high, he could enjoy the rare pleasure of feeling scolded and humble. To Lord Fisher as to Sir Lionel Cust, King Edward, from being his King and Master, came to be his hero.

Now that King Edward is only one in the long line of English sovereigns, hero worship has given place to other considerations. We are curious to know why King Edward so impressed his generation; how his life, — every incident of which has some bearing on the whole, — how his personality, appealed to the contemporary world as the essence of kingliness. We want to appraise the Edwardian character of which he was the type. But candor must be informed by the respect which the office of kingship connotes. The King of England is not as other men. He is not a mere figurehead, a ceremonial chief of state, an hereditary president conveniently saving his countrymen the trouble of choosing some politician, whose chameleon tints have grown neutral with age, to represent them collectively for a period of years. He is an embodiment of the mystery of authority; in the words of the mediæval English lawyers, he is the Vicar of the Great King. He is the Christian symbol of government in a society which consists of a partnership between the dead, the living, and the unborn; a protest too, if you like, against the mechanical conceptions of politics which have been in the ascendant since the French Revolution and have reached their reduction *ad absurdum* in the antics of Marxian socialism.

Mr. Bernard Shaw vehemently protests, in his Preface to *The Apple Cart*, that King Magnus is not the product of such doubts as a socialist may feel in his foursquare materialist creed. But the playwright embarrasses the polemist.

Though the parent denies the begetter of his child, one can see in King Magnus something of the shrewdness, the *savoir-*



*faire*, and the common sense for which the Bernard Shaw of his prime had the example before him in the King who has given his name to that era wherein Mr. Shaw first attained repute. The stage figure is a less universal character than the democratic monarch foreshadowed by King Edward VII. Mr. Shaw's creed prevents him from admitting that any special divinity surrounds a king, that there are any differences between him and his ministers except those created by intellect or personality. King Magnus shines in the council chamber. But if it is the duty of a king to know and manage men, it is his no less to know and try to understand women. Magnus inspires little confidence in the boudoir and one cannot imagine him showing the zest demanded by the delightful profession on the race course, or even at the dinner table.

Still the play of Mr. Shaw's old age stands as an interesting commentary on the disillusion which Englishmen first began to feel about parliamentary government when King Edward reigned, a disillusion grown deeper since, with the increasing signs of its futility and corruption. It inspired Mr. Horatio Bottomley, in the days when he was the oracle of the proletariat, to assert that with King Edward on the throne Parliament was "almost a redundancy," and Mr. John Ward, the labor leader, could tell the Trades-Union Congress in 1907 that the King was "almost our only statesman" — both palatable truths. Lord Fisher said much the same thing in more picturesque language when he remarked that King Edward shared Henry VIII's attributes of combining autocracy with a socialistic tie with the masses. "The greatest of our kings since William the Conqueror" was Sir William Harcourt's verdict, which has the more weight as coming from a potential Prime Minister of the time. One cannot, however, stop to consider the judgments passed on King Edward, who fulfilled the popular conception of kingship with a completeness no other English sovereign

has equaled since the Tudors. Dean Inge strikes chill with his qualification of "not more than fair average ability." "Though too superficial to be a statesman, he was a supreme diplomatist" is the verdict of an author who himself served a long apprenticeship in diplomacy.<sup>1</sup> "The King was not a dexterous diplomatist, but he was a great monarch" stands as the opinion of Lord Balfour, which at any rate gives the direction along which the subject can be seen in better perspective. For King Edward's *métier* was that of king, and it is as a king, and not as a statesman or a diplomatist, that the touchstone must ultimately be applied to him.

He may well have thanked Fortune that fitted him so well for his profession by giving him nothing more than the qualities it required. Any hobby except sport may prove a derogation for a king; any intellectual tastes a handicap. Thanks to his temperament, King Edward could observe a royal mean in all things that did not directly concern his vocation; here he was strenuous to a fault. As a consequence, after a social primacy of forty years in which he steered society out of the doldrums of Mid-Victorianism and incidentally set fashions which still touch our clothes, our food, our travels, he was able to modernize the monarchy, to make it at once fashionable and popular at home, and to attain abroad a position held by none of his predecessors. If he had not the mastery of Europe, as one foreign diplomatist averred, he was unquestionably the greatest of its personalities, its Uncle, whose strongly marked features and corpulent form embodied for the cartoonists every mood from amiability and bonhomie to sinister cunning — an Epicurean Uncle who knew everything worth knowing about the art of living, a large-hearted Uncle who loved all the world except his imperial German nephew. It is not easy for even the best of Edwardians to realize how King Edward dominated the life of his time. He was the very type of the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Harold Nicolson.

era' in which sport became the dominant passion of the Anglo-Saxon world, — in this matter America has followed obediently in the wake of England, — in which golf and lawn tennis became an international preoccupation, the cinema mewed its flickering youth, and what the moralists call pleasure was unashamedly pursued.

Yet the leaven of change works slowly. Superficially, and amongst the small class which gives the key and rhythm to social life, the Edwardian era had much in common with its Victorian predecessor. Punctilio still ruled. The restaurant habit, which the Jewish genius has now placed within the reach of all sorts and conditions of Londoners, had not deposed the private hostess from her long tenure of power, and the great houses of Mayfair, ill suited for daily life but magnificently set out for entertaining, stood in their gardens little dreaming that they were to give way to blocks of flats where the rich enjoy bathrooms de luxe and standardized food electrically cooked in communal kitchens. It was an age indebted to the past for the sobriety of its amusements and the exuberance of its fashions. Dancing was a ritual, less solemn than to-day, but more decorous. Excessive propinquity in partners was considered bad form, and no woman could complain that she was "more danced against than dancing." Yet women's clothes, in their exaggeration of the contours of the female form, urged the Puritans, led by Mr. H. G. Wells, to cry that women were oversexed, a charge which the very different modes of the post-war decade also inspired in the frightened male.

Whatever truth lay in the accusation, the Edwardian man of fashion remained sartorially a modest and timid creature. During the season he only ventured to show himself in the tubular single-breasted morning coat. Striped trousers and the top hat emphasized the vertical at the expense of the horizontal, and pointed the moral that man in becoming a social animal had ceased to be free. The Edwardian era,

indeed, shrinks to almost a remote antiquity when one remembers that elaborately appareled ladies still drove round the Park of an afternoon, within the gates of which motors were forbidden to blast their noisy way, that young women went out visiting with their mothers, and young men conscientiously left cards upon those who had fed them.

But this dignified *envoi* to the century of Victoria was also the preface of to-day. The Court led the way in breaking down the old exclusiveness, which had, in fact, already crumbled before the inroads of beauty, brains, and wealth — especially wealth. The jesting Ruskin of the time, in publicly apologizing for living in a country where conditions were so deplorable, could affirm that the universal regard for money was the one hopeful fact in the civilization of the day. In spite of this passion, the social conscience was awake and quickened even the domestic legislation of the tired Tory government, — the first in the King's reign, — which was precariously ruled by the philosophic doubt of the most elegant mind in public life, a mind uncongenial to King Edward and his era. Then the current of democracy, sweeping over Mr. Balfour, brought Mr. Lloyd George to the surface, and for the first time England saw the Chancellor of the Exchequer paying the homage to wealth which consists in abusing the rich.

The King on his throne looked down with fair equanimity upon such incipient sallies of socialism as were shown in Mr. Lloyd George's notorious Limehouse speech. True, he had little enough sympathy with such a political philosophy, but then he was also little influenced by the Tory respect for rank. To a king all his subjects should appear much of a muchness, and King Edward was in nothing more royal than in this. He chose his friends where he liked and would surely have laughed at the explanation of a courtier that the cold shoulder of the higher aristocracy drove him more and more into the society of wealthy and parvenu financiers.

King Edward, who resembled Louis XIV in his equalitarian views, could never have done what he did had he considered the more exalted ranks of the peerage as having special claims to be the companions of royalty. Many found the King's friends exasperating — "court pests" is a term used in this connection by the wife of his third Prime Minister. But even Mrs. Asquith, in saying that the King was fond of her husband but not really interested in any man, admits his loyalty to all his "West End friends, female admirers, Jewish financiers, and Newmarket bloods," and adds that to fine manners he brought "rare prestige, courage, and simplicity."

The past slips away and London has already half forgotten King Edward. His father sits in heroic splendor under his Gothic *baldacchino* in Kensington Gardens. Queen Victoria's effigy, in various stages of queenliness, stands at many points in the metropolis. The bronze King Edward in the ill-fitting Field Marshal's uniform at the bottom of Waterloo Place — a thinner, less royal figure than London remembers, restraining the impatience of his pawing charger whilst he earnestly looks out for the bishops descending the steps of the Athenæum — only affords another instance of the innate protestantism which prevents Englishmen from making graven images of their heroes. It is a grudging commemoration of a sovereign who, in the far-off eighties, supported the movement to unify the government of London and transform it from a collection of parishes into a civic entity. How many of those who hurry down Kingsway to where its spacious avenue divides beneath the massif of Bush House realize that it was so named in honor of King Edward — the Kingsway that with Aldwych is the finest memorial of the new London which first grew conscious of itself in the late Victorian era and has suffered from growing pains ever since?

Apart from Kingsway and Aldwych, only isolated build-

ings stand as Edwardian landmarks. Their extraordinary variety of styles testifies to the uncertain æsthetic standards of the time. The emporial Roman of Selfridge's expresses the Edwardian assurance in material values; as one looks at those great over-decorated Corinthian columns the ghosts of Golden Edwardian sovereigns jingle in the pocket. The Romanesque cathedral in Westminster transcends the expression of a mere period in the lift of its majestic roof, but the decoration, inside and out, has something of the glitter to recall an age in everything flamboyant and egotistical. The hotels, too, are amusingly self-conscious; the Carlton with its cosmopolitan air, the Piccadilly almost too grand, the Ritz suggesting in its *château* style that it cultivates the art of fine living once perfected in France.

But the Englishman has never been a town dweller from choice, and of all cities London has best succeeded in keeping the country at its front door. The visitor who chooses to spend an idle hour in observing where King Edward left the clearest impress of his personality upon his capital can do so by leaving his hotel in Mayfair and strolling through the Green Park. As he walks over the grass where cows still grazed and were milked at the beginning of the century, he may reflect on this national propensity to seek the country in the town, and, if he be historically-minded, trace it back to the Germanic ancestors of the English people whom Tacitus praised for their dislike of cities—a dislike which Queen Victoria heartily shared.

The avenues of plane trees lead our visitor towards Buckingham Palace. But his eager eyes will hardly have had time to observe that the façade of the main east front is a grandiose afterthought before his legs will have carried him within the precincts of the Victoria Memorial. Here he will feel the influence of a spirit not elsewhere met with in London, a Latin inspiration which exploits the sweep of open spaces, the vistas of avenues and arches. The tamely

academic statuary shows how the Edwardians were the heirs of the Victorians. Like so much monumental sculpture, this revels in allegory. Peace and Progress, Manufactures and Agriculture, are symbolized by figures which in spite of their heroic size carry all the marks of good breeding that the race of Epstein so deplorably lacks. The British Lion makes probably his last appearance on a national monument. There is no strangeness of proportion in the beauty of these men and women, these water nymphs and naked little boys.

Yet the soul of the Memorial lies not in Sir Thomas Brock's conventional statues. The layout of the avenues, the way the Mall disappears into the Admiralty Arch, through which when visibility is good the traffic in Charing Cross can be seen dimly, Constitution Hill crowned by the Wellington Arch — these are the things that attract the attention and are meant to strike the imagination. From these the eye rests upon the columns and pilasters of the façade of the Palace that was also refronted in memory of the Queen. Its rhythms may lack vitality, its proportions convey little hint of ultimate and kingly perfection, yet as it presents itself, self-confident, a little pompous and slightly vulgar, it not unfaithfully reflects the reign of Queen Victoria's son that was remarkable for its complete sympathy between sovereign and people.

The Victoria Memorial, uncompleted at his death, emphasizes both aspects of the ideal which King Edward expressed with such virtuosity. It affords a suitable background for the pageantry that he loved, so that on state occasions Majesty, as it sways through the gilt-tipped Palace Gates to open Parliament, or on some ceremonial progress, may present itself to the demos in an environment of due pomp and circumstance. And it has brought Buckingham Palace from the seclusion of early Victorian days, when Constitution Hill was closed to the carriages of all except peers and privy councilors and the Mall did not

debouch into Trafalgar Square, and told Londoners that the King is one of themselves. Since the Mall has become a great thoroughfare, cars and taxis now swirl incessantly round the marble fountains of the Memorial in which Edwardian nymphs disport themselves. No wonder the Queen Victoria of marble turns her back upon the Palace where, even in the quiet days of old, she suffered from its uncomfortable proximity to the noise and restlessness of the town.

One may emphasize the awe and majesty of kingship. No one knew better how to do so than King Edward — and how to throw them aside. But they are in any case nothing unless accompanied by the affection of the people. There was a peculiar fitness in that this master of pageantry should have received the accolade of his subjects' favor on no ceremonial occasion and been acclaimed as master of his people's hearts by the frank and outspoken public opinion of the Turf.

The Derby of 1909 still remains the most familiar incident of his reign. The King's horse, Minoru, was fancied; there was a good chance that the colt might win the race for the reigning sovereign, an unprecedented thing. On that showery and overcast afternoon, typical of an English spring, King Edward, who looked back on a racing career which no one except Lord Rosebery could rival in its success, prepared to watch his last Derby. As Prince, he had already won it twice. His pleasure in anticipating a third victory — and he loved beyond measure to see his horses win — was clouded by ill health and care. The battle against death had already begun; the panorama of politics was infinitely depressing. He knew better than Mr. John Burns, who that very month had declared, with all the authority of a cabinet minister, that it was impossible for war to arise between Great Britain and Germany over





*Wide World Photos*

KING EDWARD, QUEEN ALEXANDRA, AND PRINCE GEORGE  
AT THE MEET OF THE WEST NORFOLK HOUNDS

1908



Belgium; he feared what might come from the cries which the left wing of the Liberal Party and Labor, now becoming a lusty infant, were uttering in unison against the "dishing of social reform by the building of Dreadnoughts"; and he dreaded the coming clash between the two houses of Parliament. Thus care and ill health sat upon the royal brow. And even if both were forgotten in the excitement of the Turf which galvanized the heavy, rain-drenched atmosphere of the Epsom Downs that afternoon, the racing owner remembered that Minoru was only a leased colt, and not bred in the Sandringham stables as Persimmon and Diamond Jubilee had been.

The race was close, desperately close. The favorite, the American colt Sir Martin, fell at the half distance, and so put some of the fancied horses out of the race. But in the straight Louviers challenged Minoru, who was leading, and the two, after a neck-and-neck struggle for the last furlong, flashed past the post in so close a finish that until the numbers went up no one knew which was the winner. Then the silence of suspense was broken by a demonstration of frantic enthusiasm. In a moment the course was black with people, all running towards the grand stand and shouting as they ran. As the King stood in the royal box acknowledging the cheers, men remarked his pallor and the nervous twitch of his mouth. The Queen, wearing the impassive mask of her beauty, was yet seen to brush tears from her eyes. And all the while the crowd grew in size and frenzy, whilst it waited for the owner of the Derby winner to come down and exercise his traditional privilege of leading in his horse.

When he appeared, smiling and bowing on the steps of the royal box, the cheering redoubled. Round the unsaddling enclosure the crowd had overborne the police. A surging mass of humanity, shouting, throwing caps in the air, those at the back jumping up and down in their anxiety to see the King who was also a Derby winner. Cries of "Vive le Roi!"

could be heard amidst the more inarticulate shoutings from English throats. It seemed impossible that the owner of Minoru could ever reach the colt. The King did not hesitate. Preceded by a few constables, whom he refused to allow to take any strong measures, he walked out and was lost in the middle of the crowd, some eyewitnesses recording how he was actually slapped on the back by one or two exuberant subjects. Thus elbowing his way, repeating in his deep guttural voice the formula, "Make way for the King," he was literally surrounded by his people in a way that no English sovereign before him perhaps had ever been. One of them, with the freemasonry of the race course, expressed the distaste that Englishmen feel for the rancor of politics and cried: "Now, King, that you have won the Derby, go back home and dissolve this bloody Parliament."

Unconstitutional advice, and King Edward was above everything else a constitutional sovereign. But it responded closely enough to the popular conception of him as a man who had little sympathy with "faddists and meddlers," as the leading sporting paper described those whom it declared wished, en route for the millennium, to rob the people of their horse racing. Could they have witnessed this scene, it said, they would have shrunk away ashamed and amazed. It inspired an American observer to tell his English cousins that their King was far nearer to his subjects than was the American president to his fellow citizens. "A mighty fine thing to have a sovereign who shares the amusements of his people and trusts them so absolutely," was the judgment of this New Yorker who had been drawn across the Atlantic by the magnet of the Derby. He could not know that King Edward confided to his entourage, after the crowd had sung the national anthem and the cheering had at last died down, that his victory made him happy chiefly in the pleasure it gave his people.

Within a year the cheering crowds at Epsom were exchanged for the sombre, white-faced queue that filed past his bier in Westminster Abbey.

The shock of his sudden death, for sudden it seemed to the public who had only learned of his illness thirty-six hours before, proved the measure of his kingship. So completely had King Edward identified himself with his office that even to those in the inner circle of politics, where the guiding impulse is a buoyant, if unavowed, belief in the indispensability of self, his loss came as a National Calamity. The capital letters were Lord Fisher's, who mourned his friend as well as his sovereign. But they expressed a universal sentiment. Sir Edward Grey, the grand seigneur of the Cabinet, felt that "something like a landslide had happened." The Premier's wife — Mr. Asquith characteristically was at sea — burst into tears when the head messenger came to her bedroom and told her the news. A whole nation, half a continent, mourned. "The feeling of grief and sense of personal loss throughout the country, indeed throughout Western Europe, is extraordinary and without a single jarring note." So wrote Lord Morley, the austere politician, whose religious disbelief did not prevent him from worshiping the ballot box, the contemporary sign manual of the great spiritual emancipation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

If those behind the scenes were thus affected, one may imagine the general mourning for King Edward, who fulfilled the people's idea of what a King should be the better for having warmed both hands at the fire of life. It was all very well for an aristocratic sansculottist like Wilfrid Scawen Blunt — whom King Edward years before had called "a disloyal and eccentric Jesuit" — to declare that the absurdities about him in every paper surpassed belief, and to add that in no print had there been the smallest

allusion to his "pleasant little wickednesses." These human weaknesses, which good taste banned from the written word, helped to make the round, human character, even to heighten the impression of kingliness. In a sense Napoleon III's remark that there are no excuses, no extenuating circumstances for a king, holds. As Prince of Wales, King Edward had often to experience the truth of this dictum. Yet, like its author, it is a superficial dictum, for the rational portion of mankind tempers with caution its esteem for saintliness, and allows it no free play till its saints are safely dead and buried. The greatest of them, indeed, realizing the tender interest both God and man take in the sinner, have vehemently protested their wickedness. And the sane European consciousness, keeping the balance between the body and the spirit, respects that loyalty to the Cosmos, first expressed by the Creator when He looked upon His works and found them good. It likes to see its leaders have no puny wish to be set free from "too much love of living," as the young singer of the seventies put it, no less an exuberant lord of words than was Albert Edward an exuberant prince in conduct.

In that broad stream of lamentation many dipped their pens. They expressed forebodings in various keys. The paradox of the Edwardian era as a time of great prosperity and of domestic and international strain did not escape notice. With the passing of its figurehead, the shadow of 1914 grew deeper, the strife of party spirit more ominous. Alfred Austin raised his official voice to call for a halt in the constitutional struggle where Mr. Asquith was playing the rôle of a Mirabeau with the help of the Irish Vote.

The Edwardian Laureate's verse trod no path sacred to the Muses. These must have been more content with the quite unofficial poet whose verses were sold in the streets of London on the day of King Edward's funeral.

Greatest sorrow England ever had  
When death took away our dear Dad;  
A king he was from head to sole,  
Loved by his people one and all.

His mighty work for the Nation,  
Making peace and strengthening Union —  
Always at it since on the throne:  
Saved the country more than one billion.

There was not a jarring note. Even the *Labour Leader*, where Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, in what officialdom thought a disgraceful article, had objected to the King "hobnobbing with a bloodstained creature like the Tsar," admitted that as "kings go, King Edward was not a bad sort." It agreed that he had "played the part to perfection, and created a standard for his successors." But Socialism should have no king in its whitewashed temple except the purity of the doctrine, no omnipotence except that of the boss. And the *Labour Leader* therefore qualified its praise by discreetly offering incense to its idol, and by observing that the increase of influence of the Throne, the inevitable result of the popularization of the monarchy, was "an illustration of the eternal fact that there is always a reverse side of the medal."

It is the abiding interest of King Edward's character that he stood thus successfully at the meeting place of civilizations. He was the last of the company of kings which gave the world a Louis XIV and a Henry VIII — the first of the new breed we see to-day in Albert of Belgium and to-morrow, if you like, in King Magnus of *The Apple Cart*.

## II

### “WHEN THAT I WAS AND A LITTLE TINY BOY”

THE king who was to work this change delayed his appearance till nearly twenty-one months after the marriage of his parents—Princess Victoria, the first fruits of their union, having preceded him by a little less than a year. Some regretted this. Others,

Thinking it a genial sign  
When a lady leads the line,

bore the suspense hopefully. His arrival in the middle of the morning of November 9, 1841, justified their optimism and pleasantly coincided with Lord Mayor's Day, the sole occasion in the year when the City of London allows itself the diversion of processional pageantry. Aptly, too, the first divine invocation for divine help on behalf of the royal infant was set out in the illuminated scroll stretching above the heads of the company which enjoyed the hospitality of the City at the Guildhall a few hours later.

Three weeks after the future king had for the first time thus associated himself with pageantry and good cheer, his mother could describe him as a wonderfully strong and large child. Already the physical characteristics of those familiar features were discernible: the large blue eyes, darker then than afterwards, which, like those of Louis XIV, became so expressive a means of conveying the royal displeasure; the Coburg nose, rather Semitic than aquiline; the mouth



indicating character and a measure of willfulness in the finely moulded curves. The mother's joy as she looked upon her son and heir was fortified by her hopes and prayers that he might be like "his dearest Papa" — a wish that the prejudices of her subjects would have prevented them from sharing. This she could hardly have realized. But even in the jealously guarded atmosphere of the royal lying-in, the Queen was able to observe that one person remained aloof from the spirit of rejoicing. "Pussy," she wrote to her Uncle Leopold, "is *not* at all pleased with her brother."

The young and precocious Princess Royal pouted at having to share the royal nursery. The old and worldly-wise Prime Minister shook his head when he learned that the Heir Apparent was to be called Albert Edward. Albert, Lord Melbourne sagely observed, was a good old English name with a certain degree of popularity attaching to it from ancient recollections, but Albert, even in its Anglo-Saxon form of Ethelred,<sup>1</sup> had been little in use since the Conquest. He did not add that its associations in that remote period had been unhappy, neither did he suggest that the Prince, in accordance with any thousand-year-old precedent, should be called Ethelred Edward. His tactful hint, however, that Edward should be the first name, though unheeded by the young parents, was adopted by the Prince when he came to the throne.

One may detect the Prime Minister's distrust of the growing German influences at Court in the remarks he added upon a subject which Englishmen approach from an angle peculiar to themselves. They have no great faith in the power of instruction to form character. They believe that the young should as far as possible work out their own salvation, a belief upon which are built those unique institutions the public schools and the older universities. In such vigorous democracies, amidst the clash of youth upon youth,

<sup>1</sup> Noble in counsel.

has been formed the dominant English type, a type possessing qualities of leadership that is only now beginning to pass away. "Be not over solicitous," Lord Melbourne wrote, under the impulse of these ideas, "about education. It may be able to do much, but it does not do so much as is expected from it," and he went on to point out that George IV and the Duke of York, who were educated like English boys and upon the system of English schools, were, with all their faults, "quite Englishmen." Unfortunately for little Albert Edward, Prince Albert did not heed advice of which his German thoroughness made him disapprove; fortunately for the future of the monarchy, the influence of race on character proved stronger than the system to which the Prince's boyhood and youth were sacrificed, and the only thing distinctively German which remained with King Edward was his lifelong inability to pronounce the English *r* without a Teutonic roll. In any case the preparation for the profession, the delightful profession, in his case, of hereditary kingship, is bound to entail a hard novitiate, and he would be a foolish candidate who, having chosen his parents and safely reached the initial stage of his high calling, would complain that the trouble of being born was the first, and not, as is sometimes vulgarly supposed, the last, of those that beset him.

Yet there was much happiness in the childhood of this scion of many kings, whose inherited aptitudes, if the genealogists and the British Israelites were to be believed, might have come to him even from David. None of them, perhaps, grew amidst such domestic felicity as prompted Queen Victoria to write, "Not only no royal *ménage* is to be found equal to ours, but *no other ménage* is to be compared to ours." If this atmosphere softened, it did not obliterate, the Prince's native temper. At his christening his governess remarked the fierce, stout features of the royal baby. When he was little more than a year old the same shrewdly observant

great lady described him as “passionate and determined enough for an autocrat,” though there shone in the intervals of these explosions “a lovely mildness of expression and calm temper” — so Lord Fisher might have written of the sexagenarian monarch.

Almost as soon as he could speak, — the first lisplings were in German, — the habit of asking questions showed itself, a Socratic method that remained with him through life, later strengthened by a Socratic belief in the superiority of the spoken to the written word. He could follow his bent the better since, so far as befits a small child, he was without shyness. At the christening of his brother, Prince Alfred, his three-year-old eyes, already observant of the niceties of dress, gazed with curiosity upon the wig of the Archbishop of Canterbury. When the company subsequently assembled in the grand corridor, Albert Edward, unable to make others heed his question about this relic of eighteenth-century fashion, went up to the periwigged Primate himself and asked: “What is that you have got upon your head?” We are not told that the Prince was abashed at the great laugh caused by the Archbishop’s reply as “he stooped down close to him and with great respect and gentleness answered: ‘It is called a wig.’” Since the laugh was against the Archbishop, all was well. But the amusement of the Queen and her ladies chagrined him when he inquired if the pink was not the female of the carnation. “Il faut tâcher de ne pas être ridicule,” says Sacha Guitry’s Napoleon III as he prepares for the royal rôle — a sentiment kings cannot learn too young.

Sometimes his questions were prompted by acquisitive motives, which must also be abnormally developed in him who would be a true king. “Where is my gun?” he asked of Louis Philippe when that monarch was visiting Windsor, to receive later a *fusil de munition* from Paris, a modest gift which, as the bourgeois king wrote to his mother, was at any

rate strong enough to withstand "the accidents that childhood likes to inflict upon its toys." The pride that the small boy took in the Grand Cross of St. Andrew, a present from the Tsar, was perhaps of a more professional kind. But the delight in his first sailor suit, a stage in every boy's life, gave him a keener, if a more humble, pleasure as he swaggered about, crying, "Je suis un petit mousse!" to his French governess. No subsequent promotion in naval rank brought the same zest, we may be sure. His royal blood, rather than any Highland strain, gave him the right to wear the dress which sets off so well the noble beauty of the male, and partiality for the kilt, developed on his first visit to Scotland, remained with him throughout life. What boy could fail to be thrilled by the *skean dhubh* worn in the stocking, what man remain insensible to the "ornaments," the jewels that set off the bonnet and sporan and plaid tartan? Yet it remains a blot on the justness of the Prince's taste in dress that he never corrected the errors of Highland fashion committed by his father. Bare knees were rather shocking to the modesty of Victorian ladies, and local history records how the daughter of the most passionate of Victorian poets preferred on her visits to the Highlands to seek the company of midges in the summerhouses and so avoid being disturbed by the femoral exhibitionism which the kilted lairds provided for Miss Patmore's gaze in the drawing-room after dinner. To this day the incorrect tailoring of the royal kilts persists. They are worn too long, a tribute to decorum also reflected in the stockings being brought too near the knee. The amplitude and stiffness of the royal bonnet are another legacy from fashions which were set at Balmoral in the eighteen-forties.

During those early impressionable years the Prince Albert's affection, not yet clamped to the terrible system which, under the inspiration of Baron Stockmar, he inflicted on the heir to the throne, was a beneficent sun shining in



ALBERT EDWARD, PRINCE OF WALES  
1846



the royal nursery. Of him, rather than of the Queen, the children seem to have thought at the crises which occurred in their small world. Bertie regarded his father with the judicious mixture of love and fear upon which piety and religion are founded. The Prince Consort's goodness was an ever-present example. It might breed priggishness, as in Bertie's remark that he did not know how he could ever be naughty since he was so much happier when he was good. "Bless dear Papa and Mama and give them the comfort of seeing me grow up a good boy," the prayer he composed and wrote out himself, rings more true. In those populous Victorian nurseries, children were conscious that they were conceived in sin; the child of to-day, more aware of the sinfulness of his elders, if he composes prayers at all probably asks for the comfort of seeing his father and mother grow into good parents. The Prince of Wales knew well enough that, to one born a child of wrath, grace was hard enough to come by. "Vous me l'ôterez quand je ne serais pas sage," said he to his mademoiselle as he showed her a toy given him by his father. Fear of his father remained always. But in those early years it could be tintured by compassion, as in his adjuration to his eldest sister Vicky one evening, naughtily sobbing in bed: "I am afraid Miss Hildyard is gone down to call dear Papa, and dear Papa will be so sorry. Pray stop!"

The heaven that lies about us in our infancy had not faded from the Prince when his years reached the mystic seven. Wisps of the trailing Wordsworthian clouds of glory clung round him one day as he amused his brother Alfred. "Look, dear," he said, "at all the pretty pictures — oh! not that one, I think" (turning confidentially to Miss Hildyard) "he does not yet know about Samson. It is only a strong man. See" (to Prince Alfred) "how strong he was carrying those gates." This picture of fraternal solicitude is completed by the intervention of Vicky, a precocious child of eight.

"Oh! you are quite right, dear Bertie. We must never do too much with little minds." It was a pity her father did not overhear and profit from the remark.

Well might Lady Lyttelton enjoy the task of governing such a nursery. They were passionate, high-spirited children, one moment melting her heart and the next trying to bite her in rage. Explosions were frequent. Smiles and tears chased one another as across a royal April sky. But Lady Lyttelton forgave the naughtinesses, for she saw the courage that is the foundation of character, and the kindness that is the prophylactic for egoism. At a review in Windsor Park, her "Princey" — a familiarity of address not permitted to the assistant governesses, who called him "Prince of Wales" — sat on her lap in ecstasies until the firing began. Then his face fell. "I afraid! Soldiers go popping! No more! I cry!" and Lady Lyttelton loved him for his "most touching countenance and bursting heart," whilst the Princess Royal, a self-contained little girl of four, sat as unmoved as the Duke of Wellington a few paces away.

We get used to firearms. But there are few experiences more unpleasant than being upon a bolting horse. When this happened to the six-year-old Prince, who was strapped to the saddle, he kept tight hold of the reins and did not scream, though Miss Hildyard shrieked and the Princess Royal burst into tears. Lady Lyttelton relates the sequel: "Princey's pony is called Arthur and is often thought slow. Yesterday, on the Prince taking his writing lesson, Miss Hildyard said: 'Hold your thumb in the right place, Prince of Wales — so — you *can* do it right if you try, I'm sure.' 'Oh, yes!' he answered with a sly smile at her, 'I *can*. Arthur *can* gallop, we know now!' It was the only allusion he made to it — rather a clever one." The sly humor, parent of the sly smile, remained with him all his life.

Poor Lady Lyttelton! She venerated the Queen, adored the Prince Albert, found prosperity in uninterrupted lessons,



and adversity in the failings of her assistants and in the children being called away on treats — for, despite the strictness of their upbringing, pageantry was in the air they breathed. And Princey found it infinitely congenial. At three this virtuoso could "bow and offer his hand beautifully," at seven he had a childish dignity very pretty to witness, characterizing all his movements in public — such a winning little boy that when he went with his father to open the Coal Exchange the waiter who brought him his lunch, to the private room whither he had retired with Lady Lyttelton, burst into tears.

Well might she comment that royalty was a wonderful thing. Yet would all his promise ever come to fruition? Would he be a Prince in ten years' time? Would there be any princes after the republicanism rampant in the Europe of 1848 had run its course? Lady Lyttelton's forebodings were shared by many. The possibility of a revolutionary outbreak sent the Court hurriedly to Osborne and gave the future King Edward his first lesson on the instability of human things. It left its mark. To trace the fears that the King is said to have expressed for the future of his dynasty in the last months of his life to some knot tied in his boyish mind on this occasion would be to give undue importance to the presentiments of a sick man. Yet there can be little doubt that the events of 1848 helped to color the liberalism he owed to his father and eldest sister and had their share in shaping the technique of statecraft which led him, both as Prince of Wales and as King, to turn critics and potential enemies into allies and friends. Louis Blanc, to whom as an exile in London the Prince seemed "a fairy personage," was the first, but not the last, of his kind to succumb to that royal charm.

Thrones tottered in that year of unrest. Louis Philippe found himself a fugitive in the country he had visited as a

king. Queen Victoria, as she surveyed the awful state of Europe, felt "grown old and serious." Prince Albert, viewing the situation more broadly, showed a sympathy with the proletariat which the government was far from sharing. He wrote from Osborne to Lord John Russell, saying that his private inquiries pointed to the number of the unemployed in London being "very large" and criticizing the economies which led to the suspending of work upon the royal palaces and upon the "formation of Battersea Park"; he went so far as to advance the doctrine that "the Government was bound to do what it could to help the working classes over the present moment of distress." With such enlightened sympathy did King Edward's father regard the wicked Chartists.

The danger apprehended from the London mob soon passed. But it only strengthened the determination of Prince Albert, foreseeing the development of the industrial state, to equip his son for the task, the overwhelming task, that lay before him. Prince Albert's own inclinations, the promptings of Baron Stockmar, who had fashioned two generations of royalty in Queen Victoria's uncle and husband and now looked to fashion the third in the Queen's son, the encouragement of the busybodies who find ingenuous youth less able than the maturer portions of mankind to defend itself against their interference — all pointed in the same direction.

"Upon the good education of Princes, and especially of those who are destined to govern, the welfare of the world in these days greatly depends." So wrote Prince Albert in 1849. Other pens had also been busy. It was not simply a question of educating a future king. Since the Queen Regnant was only twenty-three years older than the Prince of Wales and seemed made of iron, her son would in all probability have to look forward to a long minority. Hanoverian precedents showed the tendency of the Heir Appar-

ent, shut out from political power, to ally himself with the opposition and become a thorn in the side of his parent rather than a prop to the throne. Peculiar moral dangers also surrounded the position, as the last Prince of Wales, the Prince Regent whose memory so shocked the Victorians, only too clearly exemplified. The thought that history might repeat itself in this particular was as abhorrent to the parents of the Prince as to the English middle class, which felt that its advent to political preponderance was designed by Providence to coincide with the dawn of a more Christian age.

The anonymous author of a pamphlet upon the education of the Prince of Wales explained in prose what an anonymous poet had been inspired to say in verse at the Prince's christening. With prophetic vision this Cambridge bard foresaw a future when, with the help of the British fleet,

Youth, rank and genius shall extend her reign,  
Disperse the moral cloud and rive the sensual chain.

Our pamphleteer was more precise. The little Prince should be educated by a man of broad views, neither a statesman nor a churchman, "but a man-of-letters who has passed through the alembic of adversity." He should not be given the taste for the "gaudy panoply of a soldier," but after days filled with the pursuit of wisdom he should "seek the bed of rest, not of indulgence." Above all, advised this keen-scented enemy of moral evil, "let him consider that the few moments allotted to him by his Maker between the cradle and the grave have too many imperative duties attached to them to be wasted in a state of useless torpor, or what may be still worse."

So when the Prince of Wales was seven he found himself launched on the most portentously thorough system of education ever devised by a conscientious father. Lady Lyttelton handed over her authority to a tutor, and the little

Prince's solemn preparation began. Every moment of the day had its allotted task. No minute was to be wasted, nothing left to chance. So far as human foresight could secure it, there should be no chink in the plan through which Satan might squeeze. The austere moral and intellectual edifice envisaged by the Prince Albert allowed his son no egress into any garden of the imagination, no safety valve for boyish spirits, no room for the spontaneous development of his faculties. Even storybooks were banned, and Scott's novels, commended in princely German homes for their propriety, were not allowed in the royal schoolroom. And every day the tutor submitted a written report to the Prince's parents upon their son's progress.

Henry Birch, the young cleric of eminent academic distinction chosen by the Prince Consort for the responsible task, soon won the affections of his warm-hearted little charge. A wiser parent would have been satisfied with this and, remembering that slow-growing fruit has the best flavor, left the small boy's attainments to ripen gradually. But few fathers are magnanimous enough not to wish to follow the primordial example and to make their children after their own image. Prince Albert ardently desired his eldest son to grow up studious, reserved, discreet, showing a Teutonic geniality towards ideas, a Teutonic jealousy for the barriers of rank — in short, another Albert. As the young father saw that the boy gave no signs of fulfilling this ideal, he fussed and worried. In the mistaken belief that his son would equip himself to handle men by learning to handle words, Prince Albert laid special stress on the diary which the Prince of Wales kept under his tutor's supervision, and he was pained when the bald, childish style betrayed none of the literary facility that the precocious Vicky had at her command — fortunately for her brother, since we have it on the authority of the greatest master of European kingcraft that a king should write as little as possible.

Prince Albert, even had he known of this dictum, would hardly have paid attention to anything Louis XIV might have said — a monarch whose religious opinions were based on the distrust of human nature inevitable for those who rather stress the supernatural portions of Christianity than regard "the pure and comprehensive Christian morality" as the solid foundation on which the supernatural elements of the religion rest. Baron Stockmar had drawn this distinction in one of his educational theses, and with it Prince Albert fully concurred. It seemed, indeed, possible that the Prince of Wales was failing to fit into the mould owing to Mr. Birch's theological views, for he paid special attention to the Catechism, a statement of Anglican doctrine so nicely balanced that it could easily be made to incline to the Romanist views of the High Church Party. When Mr. Birch found it expedient to resign, his charge was disconsolate. The boy's trouble and sorrow were remarked by the ladies of the Court, who related how "the affectionate dear little fellow" used to leave notes and presents on Mr. Birch's pillow "which were really too moving."

The new tutor was a layman. But in spite of a precise manner and the legal training which narrows, while it strengthens, the mind, Mr. Gibbes soon saw that the parental system must be shattered against the native exuberance and restlessness under restraint of the ten-year-old Prince. He warned the parents. He did not tell them, following the example of another royal tutor, that royalty consists almost entirely in action and that it might be an advantage, as it proved to the Roi Soleil, if the Prince showed himself indifferent and nonchalant towards purely scholastic exercises. The diagnosis of Louis XIV's preceptors, that whilst neither learned, intellectual, nor artistic, he was immediately interested in affairs and bombarded everyone with questions, might be applied to King Edward's own youth.

With undeviating insistence continued the pathetic efforts

of a well-meaning father and of a mother who, though an authoritarian as a queen and a parent, showed a wifely submissiveness to her husband. Queen Victoria's personal impulse was towards a more English freedom. Her own Spartan virtues might even have counseled her to send the Prince to Eton. The Prince Consort mistrusted the Spartan virtues, and feared the Spartan vices of the public schools. He wished to shield his son behind the same prickly etiquette that hedged himself against the criticism and unpopularity of which he was the victim. Since the Prince of Wales could not be brought up in complete seclusion, he was sometimes allowed to entertain a few Etonians to tea at Windsor Castle. But lest he should suffer in any way from contact with these carefully chosen scions of well-known families, his father took tea with them, and not even his son's lightness of social touch could dispel the awe which Prince Albert shed upon these harmless boyish functions.

As the Prince of Wales grew older, as he approached adolescence with its dangers and temptations, the father's sense of responsibility made him tighten the régime. He was less than ever willing to allow his son the freedom that the boy instinctively craved, the freedom sometimes to run wild, to be boisterous and do forbidden things, to indulge the nostalgia for the lost pleasures of savagery from which the young suffer. Such variety as came into his life was the result of the restlessness characteristic of Courts. He never stayed long enough in one spot to attain that familiarity with places and things which should form the background to every childhood, whilst the state functions which he attended with his parents were no safety valve, but an additional cause for unrest in an excitable boy. His taste for the color and movement of life was more satisfactorily indulged by the drama. The command performances at Windsor Castle at Christmastide, his visits to London theatres in the season, and the private theatricals in which the royal children

occupied their rare leisure, were probably the most valuable and enduring lessons he received — more valuable than his excursions into music, that nursery governess of the Muses, or into art, a world in which he was never at home, though a crayon drawing by this namesake of Dürer once fetched fifty-nine guineas, a sum never realized by the thirteen-year-old Albrecht.

Life, not art, is a king's business, and the stage at least held up a mirror to it. Paris did more. It was life itself, and the visit paid by the Prince, now nearly fourteen years old, to the city which expresses the European spirit with such incomparable grace and verve left an indelible mark. The boy succumbed. Paris dazzled him, as his exotic kilted figure dazzled the Parisians. In the brilliancy of the French Court, the dark shadow of his father's tutelage momentarily disappeared. Napoleon III, who understood at any rate the superficialities of the technique of kingship, seemed a fascinating person, the more so since his manner towards the Prince was that of one man to another. To the charms of the Empress Eugénie, the susceptible boy easily yielded. It was all wonderful — a revelation of how delightful the profession might be made. For a week he basked in the unaccustomed radiance. Everyone's heart was at his feet. Elderly generals cried as the handsome boy, always in kilts, knelt at his mother's command by the tomb of Napoleon while an August thunderstorm burst overhead. Beautiful ladies remarked how well he danced. When the week's visit came to an end and his parents made ready to turn homewards, the Prince, fledging his Cherubino's wings, suggested to the Empress that he and Vicky should stay behind. She doubted whether Mama would be able to do without him. “Don't you believe it,” he stoutly replied. “There are six of us at home and they don't want us at all.”

Naturally the wish remained unfulfilled. It was the second indiscretion the Prince had committed in connection

with the royal visit to France. But there is a symbolical fitness in both. The one declared his love for Paris that remained a lifelong passion. The other first made public the gropings towards the entente with France which his government was to reach half a century later. At a children's party the boy blurted out: "Papa is going to France" — upon which there was a hush. "Rev. Gibbes put his finger to his lips and somebody else her hand on H. R. H.'s mouth. But the murder was out." King Edward never deigned to follow the example of his tutor (upon whom Disraeli, the chronicler of this scene, has bestowed the sacrament of holy orders) and put his fingers to his lips.

Back in England, the Prince returned to his books and the endless tasks under his tutor with ill grace. He was no young Alexander, sleeping with an *Iliad* and a sword under his pillow. But then neither Mr. Gibbes nor Mr. Tarver, who taught him theology and the classics, was an Aristotle; nor was Prince Albert a King Philip. Yet the son of Albert resembled the son of Philip in his bursts of choler, and, like him, looked forward to a manhood under arms, an ambition that the stirring events of the Crimea and the Mutiny quickened, though no companies of youth submitted to his young generalship as they did to Alexander of Macedon and Louis of France, those two paragons of kingship in the ancient and modern world.

Prince Albert, distressed at his son's indolent waywardness, put the blame, fatherlike, on his son and not on himself. Everyone saw the errors of the system except the Queen and Baron Stockmar, and failure eventually grew so patent that some concession had to be made. Prince Albert consented to a temporary relaxation of his personal surveillance and the boy started off on a walking tour through Dorset with the precise Mr. Gibbes and one of Prince Albert's gentlemen at Court. This grim experiment — and the



Prince was never much of a walker — ended after a week because the interest aroused amongst the unimpressible people of Wessex by the young Prince staying at country inns on his road had no place in his father's scheme. But it slightly deflected the course of the royal education. The next year the boy undertook the first real tour that afforded him the solace of boyish companionship — Lord Halifax, one of the four contemporaries who accompanied him, is still alive — and of escape from the paternal eye. At last high spirits had an outlet — even to the chasing of a flock of sheep into the shallows of Windermere, for which he suffered rebuke from a farmer's wife more merited than that meted out to his ancestor Alfred by a woman of similar degree. The Prince, in fact, enjoyed himself thoroughly, though his father found fault with the literary inadequacy of the diary, which was as dry as this kernel of a dry system deserved to be.

Another milestone on the long road to independence came when his parents allowed him to choose his own clothes. With the jealousy of power natural to a reigning sovereign whose power comes from above, his mother had misgivings, and to impress her son with the importance of the privilege she explained her views on dress in writing. “I must now say that we do not wish to control your own taste and fancies, which, on the contrary, we wish you to indulge and develop. But we do *expect* that you will never wear anything *extravagant* or *slang*, not because we don't like it, but because it would prove a want of self-respect and be an offence against decency, leading — as it has often done in others — to an indifference to what is morally wrong.”

The influence of clothes on morals has exercised many acute minds. Maybe the Prince's parents exaggerated the evils of dandyism. In any case they need have had no anxiety as to the extravagance of their son's taste in dress being the exciting cause for extravagance in conduct. For

if he was not the first to secure a sartorial primacy for Savile Row, he consolidated it into an empire to whose sway the males of both hemispheres pay a loyalty not less sincere, if less costly, than that of their womenkind to the shrines of fashion in the Rue de la Paix. Over a side of life so important that it has fascinated the seers of all ages, including our own, he exercised a lifelong kindly influence. He may not have emancipated the male from the stiffness of starch. But he undermined the supremacy of the top hat; the Norfolk jacket launched from Sandringham a covert attack on the waistcoat that almost succeeded in releasing mankind from a bourgeois encumbrance; late in life he courageously attempted to grapple with the tyranny of the trouser crease by wearing this at the side of the leg — an innovation which unhappily proved in advance of public opinion. His was a kindly and a kingly influence — for he never underrated by a button the part dress played in the ritual that goes to make up an ordered social life.

This, however, lay in the future. For the moment the adolescent found all his energies absorbed in withstanding the pressure of his educational régime. Sometimes it damped his resiliency of spirit; we catch perhaps a glimpse of such a phase in Prince Metternich's description of the boy as "having an embarrassed and sad air" when he visited that former enemy of Napoleon at the famous Schloss Johannisberg. There was reason for it, since the Prince Albert had insisted on his son occupying a month of his first summer vacation abroad in the study of German literature at Bonn. More often storms of passion showed the strain of the system. They passed quickly and left no resentment behind. Probably they would have occurred anyhow, for the ruler of men must be able to lose his temper; the "damn your eyes" attitude is as valuable a weapon in the armory of leadership as the sulkiness of an Achilles is the reverse.

If the father's omniscience — how dangerous a quality

in a king his grandson Wilhelm II was later to show — imparted to the son an intellectual diffidence that never wholly left him, Prince Albert's goodness prevented Albert Edward from harboring any rancor against a paternal care more prone to blame than praise. Yet praise came sometimes. When the Prince, at the impressionable age of sixteen and a half, received the sacrament of confirmation, the Queen recorded with appreciation his "gentle, good and proper" bearing, and the royal parents were gratified too with their son's replies to the "long and difficult" oral examination by his catechist, the alarming Dr. Wellesley, which lasted for a whole hour. It was natural that a youth brought up in the atmosphere of piety which the Prince Consort gave to the Court should be susceptible to the influences making themselves felt in a wider circle. Even amid the discreet entourage that surrounded the Prince of Wales, now enjoying his own establishment at the White Lodge in Richmond Park, were felt the ripples of the movement then agitating the conscience of England.

Protestantism, after a security of two centuries, was again being attacked. The "Papal aggression" was bad enough; that the Pope should have divided England into twelve dioceses, each bishop bearing a territorial title, seemed to many an indication that the imperialism of Rome, against which Elizabeth had battled, was once more raising its head. The traitors within the fold were worse. "I look upon a Roman Catholic as an enemy in the uniform; I look upon a Tractarian as an enemy disguised as a spy." With the second part of Dr. Arnold's dictum, which the Prime Minister repeated approvingly to the Queen, the Prince's parents would assuredly have agreed. They saw in the doctrines which Dr. Pusey, the leader of the Tractarians, professed to extract from the Fathers the indubitable taint of Romanism; indeed, his teaching on the Holy Eucharist — in itself a suspect term — as an aid to the penitent, on the uses of con-

fession, and on the real presence, seemed indistinguishable from those which came straight from Rome.

It was therefore with acute anxiety that, some three months after the Prince's confirmation, the Prince Consort learned of his son's intention to communicate at Mortlake Parish Church on the following Sunday, which lay in the spiritual doldrums between Trinity and Advent. To partake of the sacrament at such a time, and when he had communicated only three months before, marked a divergence from Protestant practice that carried the most serious complications. Prince Albert at once took to his pen. The letter he wrote to his son on the question was a masterpiece of special pleading. He threw out veiled suggestions that the impulse might come from the desire to imitate others, that his wish might be a light one, that the subject might be really "indifferent" to him. Whilst professing to state both sides of the case as to the Christian's responsibilities for frequent and occasional communion, he left no doubt that the parental practice of communicating twice a year, at Christmas and Easter, would be the one most pleasing to the Almighty.

Decidedly the novitiate for the delightful profession was no joke. A memorandum drawn up for gentlemen of the Prince's household at White Lodge laid down the most meticulous rules of conduct. From their example the Prince was to learn how to avoid the frivolity of dandyism, not to loll in armchairs nor slouch with his hands in his pockets, to be polite with dignity and punctilious without familiarity, to satirize follies but not to couple these with individuals, and never, never by any chance to countenance anything approaching a practical joke. And they were to use every occasion, even to the extent of looking over drawings and books of engravings, to amuse and at the same time gently exercise the Prince's mind, an all-important end to which, the Prince Consort was careful to point out, "mere games of cards and



THE PRINCE IN HIS EIGHTEENTH YEAR  
A COLONEL OF THE GUARDS  
1859



billiards and idle gossiping talk" would never conduce. In this morally pasteurized atmosphere, with Mr. Gibbes and Mr. Tarver and the future Lord Wantage, whose religious devotions he had wished to emulate, the Prince of Wales approached his eighteenth year.

Yet the Prince Consort felt dissatisfied. His son was far from reaching the standard considered necessary by this conscientious man to whom duty was a fetish, and he planned, therefore, a more intensive application of pressure on both the moral and the intellectual front. For this purpose, on the Prince's seventeenth birthday Tutor Gibbes gave way to a Governor, who had the advantages of being the younger son of an earl, a Scotch Presbyterian, and the Colonel of a Guards Regiment, the most rigorously disciplined corps in the British Army. Colonel Bruce held no nominal office. Written instructions from the Queen herself armed him with the power to regulate all her son's movements, "the distribution and employment of his time and the occupations and details of his daily life." This silent and mysterious man at once gained the full confidence of the Prince's parents, and the Governor's reports on his charge's shortcomings, the youth's exaggerated interest in dress and etiquette, his considerable share of "willfulness and constitutional irritability," his partiality for "frivolous disputes," seemed to them proof that the mild and amiable Colonel, as he appeared to the Prince Consort, rightly judged their son's character. In the hope that its inequalities might now be smoothed out and a young paragon emerge who would understand (as the Prince Albert put it) that "life was composed of duties in the due, punctual and cheerful performance of which the true Christian, true soldier and true gentleman was recognized," the Prince's father and mother sent him a Memorandum amongst his seventeenth-birthday presents in which this aphorism was suitably elaborated. It reminded him also that the knight-

hood of the Garter, another birthday present, — which a cynical statesman has commended for there being no d——d merit about it, — meant the joining of a confraternity of the selected few who wear the St. George's Cross on their shoulder in token "of the Christian fight which they mean to sustain with the temptations and difficulties of this transient life."

The lofty literary style of the Memorandum was the gossip of the Court, and it was related how the Prince of Wales shed tears as he read it. But if fine sentiments are well, action is better. So the Prince put on his new Colonel's uniform, surely admiring himself meanwhile, whilst possibly regretting the three or four inches which would have set off his royal beauty, and went to report at the Horse Guards to the Commander in Chief, his cousin, jolly "Uncle" George of Cambridge. The knightly career could not begin too soon. "Really a charming and unaffected lad" was how he appeared to this chip of the old Hanoverian block. But when the young Colonel on the unattached list, finding his wishes hanging fire, put in a request that he should undergo training at Aldershot, his father, instead of encouraging this ambition to become a truly professional soldier, agreed with his Governor on the "temptations and unprofitable companionship of the military life." Preparation for the Christian fight, in the Prince Consort's opinion, could be better made amidst the archæological and artistic treasures of Rome than on Laffan's Plain and in the lax atmosphere of the mess.

To Rome, therefore, it was decided that the Prince should go. So tautly stretched was the System that a brief visit paid to his sister in Berlin, now a bride and the wife of the future German Emperor, was not allowed to interfere with the daily curriculum of studies. The Prince Consort insisted that only slender courtesies were to be offered to the Prince and persuaded his daughter, when she found herself alone with her brother, to read improving German books aloud to



him. No Richard Feverel of fiction ever submitted to such strenuous preparation for the great race of life. No artist ever forgot to better effect the lessons he had learned in the schools than did the Prince of Wales when the time came for him to play the part he had designed for himself.

### III

#### ROME AND OXFORD

ALDERSHOT, with its unintellectual atmosphere which banned all professional talk as "shop," was no place for the Prince. Yet Rome, too, had its perils. Even the journey required careful charting. The obvious route lay through Turin, the Piedmontese capital of Victor Emmanuel, whom Cavour had already made the leading figure in Italy. But that jovial and gallant monarch, who had impressed the Prince of Wales on his visit to Windsor, was little to the taste of the Prince Consort and the Queen. Apart from the political complications which might arise at a time when war was imminent between the kingdom of Sardinia and Austria, they felt that such an atmosphere would expose their son's virtue to the gravest danger. Cavour, who wished for the visit on grounds of high policy, promised that if he brought innocence, *cette qualité précieuse*, to Turin, he would not lose it there. This hypothetical guarantee did not overcome the objections of the Prince's parents; that their refusal should not be too obvious he entered Italy through the Brenner, and early in 1859 Colonel Bruce had the Prince's establishment duly installed at the Hôtel d'Angleterre.

It was the more necessary for the Governor to rule with a severe hand since the wheels of social life ran in grooves allowing much freedom to those with the entrée to the Roman Palaces. It was a life whose traditions ran back to Boccaccio, even to Imperial Rome. In salons where rustled the skirts of cardinals and great ladies, wit and gallantry met on easier terms, since the Princes of the Church were also men of the world and the Roman matrons tempered passion

with discretion. The French Army of Occupation and the diplomats, amongst whom Odo Russell was distinguished by his neatness of tongue, found a congenial environment in a city whose cosmopolitanism has been proof against even the bracing wind of Fascism. In that society, ease and good humor reigned. A respect for etiquette made no one click his heels, and epigrams bringing unblushing smiles might be interspersed with the buffoonery of practical jokes that caused *grande*es and *monsignori* and elegant women to shout with laughter. This patrician world was completely free from the taint of *faux luxe*, and, except on special occasions, the fare at princely tables consisted of small fish, young kid, sheep's cheese, and wild chicory. The great gladly exchanged the grandeur of their palaces for low-class eating houses in the plebeian quarters of the city, as did their remote predecessors of the Empire, dining at these *trattorie* for a shilling or two with much gusto. In the artichoke season a popular resort was the Ghetto, where the Jews cooked this delicacy with special skill, and it delighted the haughty patricians to arrange picnic parties in that maze of slums which still stood in their mediæval squalor. It was, in short, a world where, to an earnest Scot, God and the Devil might seem on suspiciously good terms.

To refuse the invitations which opened the door to this Babylon was Colonel Bruce's first duty; his second, to allow no visitor to see the Prince except in his presence. Not living Rome, but dead Rome, the static Rome of monuments and buildings and pictures, was the Prince Consort's objective — "You look at two mouldering stones and are told it's the temple of something" ran his son's description of archæological pleasures. That this safe, historic Rome with its vices buried under the centuries should open itself to the young man's mind, he insisted more strongly than ever on the discipline of study. The curriculum began before breakfast in learning poetry; languages occupied the morn-

ing; after luncheon came the serious business of sightseeing under learned savants ("One of the main duties of princes," Ruskin was inspired to remark, apropos of the Prince of Wales's visit to Rome, "is to provide for the preservation of perishing frescoes and monuments"), and, when this was over, more lessons and private reading occupied the royal pupil till dinner time. Sometimes of an evening he was permitted to go to the opera, on one of these occasions seeing the first performance of *Uno Ballo di Maschera*; or Colonel and Mrs. Bruce, a kindly lady who won the Prince's regard, collected lions, mainly English and American, round the royal dinner table. The conversational roarings of these graybeards and eminences of the arts reduced the young Prince to a silence regretted by his Governor, who wrote to the Prince Consort that his son's thoughts were "centred on matters of ceremony, on physical qualities, manners, social standing and dress." How different was his eldest daughter! Vicky was developing into "a very distinguished character" to whom he could write as to an intellectual equal. The Prince of Wales, unlike his sister, did not suffer from homesickness; even if he had, his father could not have explained to him the psychological implications of this "hard-to-be-comprehended phenomenon," wherein "the I-which-has-been appears to the new-I as the vestment of the soul," as this high-thinking parent enjoyed doing to his married daughter in Berlin.

Bertie was nothing of a philosopher. The glamour of the past awoke little response in that practical mind. It threw no shadows on the flat style of the diary, now eked out by quotations from the guidebooks. Yet Rome, for all its surveillance, marked the beginning of the Prince's graduation as a diplomat. Pio Nono, on whom he paid a ceremonial call, spoke to him of the "papal aggression" as inspired by essentially pacific motives, and the Prince, already a man in *savoir-faire* and common sense, was getting on excellently

with his genial Holiness when Colonel Bruce, horrified at this incursion into politics, brought the conversation to an end. The scandalized Scot hurried his charge from the precincts of the Vatican, without even paying the customary call on the Cardinal Secretary of State — bourgeois Antonelli, who loved the beauty of roses and of women more than became his scarlet, which, incidentally, he disguised so far as might be in his daily attire. The Prince must have recalled this lapse from etiquette and good manners with a sardonic pleasure when, in after years, he learned that his former Governor's wife had placed herself under the spiritual obedience of St. Peter's successor.

His Governor's solecism passed unrebuked by his parents, and, whatever his own feelings may have been, the Prince kept them to himself. Not so the unfavorable impression left on him by the ex-Queen Christina of Spain, who lived in great magnificence at the Palazzo di Spagna. Widowhood had enabled her to raise the handsome young Guardsman, Ferdinand Muñoz, to the status of husband, but the Prince, even if he was aware that the Duke of Riansares had formerly been her fancy-man, could not overlook his lack of royal birth. The call he made on this lady and her soldier of fortune elicited the first recorded expressions of disapproval from the royal apprentice at such disregard of the *convenances* which the Queen had treated with an "altogether too delightful freedom." Another first step in the initiate's career came when he made his maiden speech, proposing the health of King Victor Emmanuel at a dinner he gave to the Sardinian envoy in Rome, the Marquis d'Azeglio. He said little; but the occasion, in emphasizing the liberal sympathies of Great Britain for the cause of the Risorgimento, was of first-rate political importance, and the Prince, who wore the newly conferred Order of the Annunciation on his British Colonel's uniform, made his début at the Hôtel d'Angleterre in a rôle that he was to play as a master in two continents.

Did the Prince of Wales first acquire in Rome that sympathy with Catholicism, shown at the time in his attitude towards the Irish seminarists, which ultimately led to the modification of his accession oath and produced so many rumors of his being himself a crypto-Catholic? There is nothing to show that the Prince, in spite of Colonel Bruce's complaints about his interest in ceremony and dress, was attracted by the Roman ritual and liturgy. He was present, as a tourist, at the washing of the feet on Maundy Thursday, but refrained from attending the other Holy Week functions on the ground that "at Rome a Protestant especially should show his attachment to his own Church." The Carnival he had enjoyed enormously. Colonel Bruce had wished him to watch the festivities from the security of a balcony, but he obtained his mother's permission to drive in the Corso and took part in the battle of flowers with zest, afterwards watching the race of the *barberi* down that famous street. Such amusement, he opined, would not be sought in Regent Street without much violence and quarreling. The discreet shakings of his Governor's head may be detected in the Prince's remark that, "whilst the Romans can pass from the unrestrained and innocent gayeties of Shrove Tuesday to the penitence of Ash Wednesday, we men of the North cannot interrupt our pleasures so rapidly."

If only the Prince could have thought of such a thing for himself, if only he had had flashes of the philosophic temperament which Germany, Carlyle's deep-thinking Germany, produced so abundantly that it lit the intelligence even of its princes, what a load would have been lifted from the father's heart! But he could detect no lightning in his son's mind, no intellectual fire, no glowing embers of an intelligence that might spring into flame — nothing, in short, except a gentle social radiance which the young man could not help emitting, even in the awe of the paternal presence. If that awe did not prevent him from urging that he

should now begin the training at Aldershot for the soldierhood demanded alike by his profession and by his many knightly orders, his wishes were powerless to deflect his father from the pursuit of a system which was beginning to excite public ridicule. In vain the Prince of Wales might point out that his younger brother was already a sailor, enjoying the rough freedom of the gunroom, and that his own claim to be a man had the priority of age. The father still believed that his son's incuriosity for scholastic studies might be overcome by mental discipline — he had, in fact, long decided to send him to Oxford.

At the same time the Prince Consort, whilst determined that his son should extract the kernel of knowledge from a university training, disliked the idea that he should also crack the shell of social observance in which this reposes at Oxford and Cambridge, and suggested that the Prince should become a member of the University without joining any particular College. This plan, which his German upbringing did not tell him was a solecism, he had to abandon, but he managed to prevent the Prince of Wales from obtaining any real benefit from the independence which is the essence of undergraduate life at the older universities, by insisting that his son should live, not in College rooms and under normal College discipline, but in a house by himself where the ubiquitous Colonel Bruce could control his comings and goings, his work and his play. "The only use for Oxford is that it is a place for *study*, a refuge from the world and its claims," was the considered opinion of this slave to duty, whose own course of superficial study at a German university (the judgment is that of a contemporary German princeling) had strengthened the distinctively doctrinaire cast of a mind which had never had its corners rubbed off by contact with the practical world — the world of which he talked so disparagingly.

Had the Prince of Wales possessed the glibness of self-

expression his father deplored the absence of, he might have pointed out that he was heir to a kingdom of this world and that to decry it was an elementary technical blunder. He might have argued that no one can despise the medium of his vocation and prosper, that even the pessimist believes his pessimism to be good; for a king to condemn the society in which he is to exercise his craft would be as sensible as for a fish to find fault with the chemical properties of water. He could have pushed home his argument from the English history which his father was so anxious for him to learn, and instanced Henry VI as a monarch who was too good for his world, James I who was too learned — with both of whom the Prince Consort had affinities, these being strengthened in the case of the Stuart by a common hatred for tobacco.

Instead, he went docilely enough to Edinburgh, where he passed the summer months of 1859 in an intensive study of applied science and languages under a whole phalanx of learned professors. He showed his faith in science, then a young and self-assertive Miss Minerva, by following the behest of Lyon Playfair and plunging his hand into boiling lead — a harmless experiment, for reasons known to scientists, so long as the skin has first been washed in ammonia; he visited factories and was shown the intricacy of industrial processes, he studied ancient history, law, German, French, and Italian; and Colonel and Mrs. Bruce collected of an evening round the royal dinner table in Holyrood the leading intellects of the Athens of the North. It was magnificent, but was it good sense? Had the public known the whole truth, there would have been an outcry. As it was, *Punch*, which reflected the general unpopularity of the Prince Consort, protested in facetious verse: —

Thou dear little Wales, sure the saddest of tales,

Is the tale of the studies with which they are cramming thee —

In thy tucker and bibs handed over to Gibbes

Who for eight years with solid instruction was ramming thee.



A sad tale, indeed, although in September the Prince Consort, descending on Edinburgh from Balmoral and presiding over a conference at which the gains of the recent attack were plotted, was already planning a post-Oxford offensive at Cambridge. After that, said *Punch*:—

To Berlin, Jena, Bonn, he'll no doubt be passed on,  
And drop in for a finishing touch, p'raps at Göttingen.

During the few weeks' holiday which intervened before he entered into residence at Christ Church, the Prince of Wales submitted to the schooling for action which his heart craved in the deer forests round Balmoral. A future king could learn more by bringing down a royal stag than in all the test tubes of the Edinburgh laboratories. At Oxford, too, one could pursue the fox as well as learning. In the hunting field the Prince escaped from Colonel Bruce and made friends of his own, very different from the serious young men favored by his father. These bloods had good hands, they were regular in nothing except their attendance at the meets, they read no book except Ruff's *Guide to the Turf* and they indulged in the noxious habit of smoking. In this circle Sir Frederick Johnstone, who attained notoriety ten years later in the Mordaunt divorce case, was a close friend; another was Henry Chaplin, over whom the Prince had a stronger influence which ultimately led him into public life. With such choice spirits of the Bullingdon, the Prince found that Oxford was not merely a refuge from the world and its claims, and both Colonel Bruce and Dr. Liddell had sometimes to close their eyes to exuberances that would have shocked the Prince Consort.

Five years ago — and yet to me  
It seems as if 't were yesterday.  
But I am now a staid M.A.,  
And you, Sir, are an LL.D.

Five years ago, we rode, we read,  
Boated, played tennis, hockey, whist, lacrosse,  
Listened to Seeley, laughed with Gosse,  
And went at shocking hours to bed.

So ran two stanzas of a broadsheet which expresses with pardonable poetic exaggeration the gentle puffs of pleasure enjoyed by the Prince at the sister universities — to some the forerunners of the gales that afterwards blew from Marlborough House with such persistence that the Nonconformist conscience of England wilted and has never been quite the same since.

The real Oxford — which has identified itself with only one English sovereign, the martyr Charles who died in defending the Oxford point of view — made little impression upon the Prince of Wales. The puckishness of paradox has ordained that Oxford, in reality interested only in its dreams, should be identified amongst the wider public by tricks of voice and manner that are thought to procure social and material advantages for those who possess them. The truth is that Oxford — the Oxford that is now lost beyond recall — held a faith beyond even the perceptions of the Prince Consort, whose liberal, ready-made idealism was too artificial to harmonize with the atmosphere which enveloped with such exquisite grace established uses and abuses. Not atmosphere, but knowledge; facts about this and that; law, economics, the anatomy of the industrial state — these were the things the Prince Consort wanted his son to assimilate; and Oxford, the authentic Oxford, kept its eyes trained on Mediterranean horizons. To the drab claims of science Oxford offered alternatives drawn from the past, from the old pagan and Christian worlds, with neither of which the Prince Consort had much sympathy. Yet, although the Prince Consort's scheme of study was ridiculous, even to its terminal examinations, his fretting at any waste of his son's time was of a piece with the Victorian seriousness which had

invaded College quadrangles and touched the denizens of College rooms. Dr. Pusey, in his indefatigable explorations of the edifice which the Fathers built on the classical learning, showed industry triumphant over ill health no less brilliantly than did the Prince Consort himself. And a fellow undergraduate of the Prince of Wales, experiencing that intellectual ferment which the Prince Consort desired to see in his son, was exceptionally impressed from a more pagan angle by the shortness of human life and by the need of making the best of that brief span. Walter Pater, then a young Marius the Epicurean, was not, however, among the number of the Prince's friends, and even the keen ear of Dr. Liddell could hardly have detected the Oxford accent in writings yet unborn.

It was in any case evident that the Prince of Wales would be no Marcus Aurelius, no philosopher-king. At Windsor they thought him the fool of the family, — an opinion not confined to the Castle, for the Prince had been seen to buy a copy of *Punch* from the bookstall at Windsor Station and actually to pay for it himself, — and they took comfort by saying that it did not matter so long as he walked in the footsteps of his parents, which seemed unlikely since he “smoked on the railway.” On his eighteenth birthday the *Times* stressed the importance of the footsteps in a leading article — the first, but by no means the last, piece of unheeded advice delivered to him from Printing House Square.

But if the Prince had no wish to acquire wisdom, he found the process of avoiding it less irksome at Cambridge than at Oxford. There he could indulge his taste for the theatre at the A. D. C.,<sup>1</sup> then a lusty but illegitimate child. And in Charles Kingsley he at last found a teacher who was nothing of a pedant. This unprofessorial professor told him something about the reasons which control the growth and decay of states. Kingsley believed, not in democracy, as did

<sup>1</sup> Amateur Dramatic Club.

Goldwin Smith, who had tried to teach the Prince history at Oxford and found him incapable of reading even the *Waverley Novels*, but in the passing of power to the hands of "scientific men." But he was no great optimist. "Aristocracies of mere birth decay and die and give place to aristocracies of mere wealth, and they again to aristocracies of mere genius, which are really the aristocracies of the noisiest spouters and scribblers. . . . When these have blown off their steam with a mighty roar but without moving the machine one yard, they are but too likely to give place to the worst of all aristocracies, the aristocracy of mere 'order' which means organized force and military depotism, and after that comes anarchy, decay and social death."

This was Kingsley's epitome of history. It is not surprising that the Prince, rather than face such alarming generalizations, turned his horse's head towards the railway station and took the train to Town. It was worth while — although his absence was sure to be discovered and he would be met in London by the royal carriages. Even then he could always keep the light touch and tell the royal footman to drive to Exeter Hall.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Victorian G. H. Q. of political Nonconformity. It was situated in the Strand, then a less respectable thoroughfare than it is to-day.

## IV

### AN AMERICAN SPRINGTIME

HISTORY may question whether the Prince enjoyed the first flush of manhood at Cambridge, or Oxford, or the Curragh, where he passed some weeks of the summer of 1861 with the Grenadier Guards. There is no doubt that he tasted for the first time the more professional joys of his vocation on the visit he paid to America at the age of eighteen. Canada, then burgeoning into national self-consciousness, wished after the Crimean War, in which a Canadian regiment of volunteers had taken part, to receive the Queen in person — an invitation which the breadth and violence of the Atlantic prevented her from accepting. But Queen Victoria, in refusing for herself, promised that the Prince of Wales should go in her stead as soon as he was old enough. The plan met with considerable opposition, for Englishmen seventy years ago, if showing a more active swarming spirit than they do to-day, felt no glow in the consciousness of Empire, and the remoteness of the Colonies was generally considered their only mark of good manners. However, the Duke of Newcastle, who was Secretary of State for the Colonies in Lord Palmerston's administration, and the Prince Consort thought otherwise, the Prince prophetically foreseeing the time when the Crown would form the link between the distant and rising countries of British stock and the Motherland. The Prince Consort's vision went further. Regarding with unprejudiced eyes the growing young American giant, he threw his influence on the side of those who wished to improve the relations between the two countries. Lord

Lyons, the British Minister at Washington, and Lord John Russell, the Foreign Secretary, were also of this party, and backed President Buchanan's invitation to the Prince of Wales to visit the United States. Though more inclined to share the anti-American bias of her subjects, the Queen remembered that her father, the Duke of Kent, had enjoyed American hospitality, and in the light of that precedent accepted on behalf of her son. But she stipulated that he should travel incognito. He should be called Lord Renfrew and stay everywhere at hotels, except when he enjoyed the hospitality of the President at the White House.

Accordingly the young Oxford undergraduate, early in the July of his first long vacation, set sail from Southampton in a man-of-war. The importance of a journey notable in the development of imperial policy was emphasized by the presence of the Duke of Newcastle, who as Colonial Secretary added to the significance, if not to the gayety, of the visit. The Duke, an austere and unhappy man whose frigid manner concealed mediocre talents and Christian principles, was to die four years later of softening of the brain, a malady possibly having its origin in the criticism he had suffered at the War Office during the Crimean War. Anxiety pursued across the Atlantic this inheritor of a great name who instilled awe with his grave look and majestic beard — a beard which, in the opinion of a New York journalist, was alone sufficient to introduce a serious turn of mind in its possessor. On the voyage the Duke — an instructor beside whom Governor Bruce, now promoted to the rank of General, was almost light-hearted and debonair — addressed himself to priming the Prince on the politics of the Canadas, where the animosity between Catholics and Protestants was as serious a preoccupation of the Colonial Secretary as the defense of the Colony against the annexationist ambitions of the United States Republicans. But if lacking in suppleness and charm, this modest and conscientious grand seigneur holds a place

in the Edwardian epic, as the first statesman to initiate the Prince into the mysteries of high politics.

In any case it is the business of ministers to worry, of princes to enjoy, and the Prince of Wales never grasped happiness more firmly than during those weeks in Canada and the United States. He found the Canadians simple, unsophisticated, thoroughly congenial. Varying the answers to addresses of congratulations — on this the Prince Consort had particularly insisted — was rather a strain on the ducal Cabinet Minister whose business it was to prepare them, but the colonists were not critical and it was always possible for the Prince to read an omnibus reply to several such loyal tributes. He enjoyed the public functions, the reviews of volunteers, — the Duke of Cambridge had laid special importance on his encouraging this first enthusiasm for imperial defense, — above all he enjoyed the dances. At these he showed youthful exuberance; at the others no nervousness and only such diffidence as was “perfectly becoming and proper.” What could have been pleasanter for an equalitarian Prince than to savor thus the earliest delights of his profession amidst such a sturdy democracy? To the Duke fell the task of snubbing Orange zeal, of rebuking the French sympathies of Quebec Catholicism; the Prince, representing the Queen, stood aloof from party politics. He had no worries, no lessons, and in America he enjoyed a blessed escape from archæology. The only ruin he visited was the Duke of Kent’s Lodge near Halifax, where his grandfather had lived — nothing remained of it but a rotunda, once a shelter for the royal band. From this place of family associations he sent his mother a sprig of sweetbriar, a piece of sentiment that Rome had failed to excite.

He bore work admirably. After the ostensible objects of his visit to Canada were fulfilled, after he had opened the bridge over the St. Lawrence at Montreal and laid the foundation stone of the Parliament Building for the United

Canadas at Ottawa, he spent a week at Toronto, where the Duke suffered his last troubles at the hands of the Orangemen. His staff suffered from the strain of continual crowds and brass bands and illuminations that banished sleep, but not from the Prince, who delighted in everything, especially the rough accommodation of prairie life, which he tasted at last, and the picturesque rogues of Indians. The only occasion when his nerves were strung was at Niagara, where Blondin's performance on the tight rope made him hold his breath. Yet a royal pleasure in action seemed to make him dally with the acrobat's offer to take him as a passenger in his wheelbarrow on another aerial journey across the rapids, an extension of the itinerary that the Duke and General Bruce vetoed with impressive sternness, though no doubt high spirits on such a point yielded easily to middle-aged severity. Finally passing through Hamilton, he promoted the Canadian Windsor for the moment into a royal abode and thence crossed over into the United States at Detroit three years before Mr. Henry Ford came into the world to preach a gospel of which that city was to be the Zion.

The ensuing month was an adventure, a romance that remained a vivid memory all his life. If the Queen and the Prince Consort thought that the incognito of Baron Renfrew would distract honest republican interest from this fine specimen of royalty, they were much mistaken, and the Prince moved from city to city amidst a crescendo of appreciation which in New York reached a staggering fortissimo, "of which the very confusions were the natural fruits of such a preposterously fecund stock of enthusiasm as typified the capacities of a people for self-government." The Prince may not have been able to draw so definite a conclusion as the American who has thus put his opinion on record,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A reporter in the *New York Herald*.



although the social activities of his visit had a background in the election then proceeding for the Presidency which carried Abraham Lincoln to the White House. In any case he appreciated American bonhomie, the masculine geniality and the feminine frankness which brushed aside etiquette, and he moved in that breezy atmosphere without a trace of self-consciousness. It would have been so easy to be the superior Englishman, to enjoy with condescension, to be gracious but cool. From this characteristic English attitude towards Americans the Prince's staff did not wholly escape. They noticed the uncouth coverings of American heads, the uncertain conventions of male attire, the ubiquitous spittoons, the pigs at Cincinnati, the poverty at St. Louis — even Washington seemed "a strange, peculiar city." The Prince, with the easy toleration that he was to apply later to social conventions in the land of his birth, did not worry about these things. So far as he was concerned, he had put aside his royalty when he crossed the American border. Lord Renfrew had only to observe, note, and enjoy.

Never before had he come into such unfettered contact with men and women. Chicago, the first place he visited, gave him a foretaste of later experiences when the mayor, as he conducted his visitor round the town, had difficulty in clearing a way through the crowds of citizens. The whole population seemed to have turned out, and the proud but embarrassed predecessor of "Big Bill" Thompson could explain that Chicago had 100,000 inhabitants—it was, indeed, a great city. At St. Louis there was a quieter reception, only the poorest of the population greeting the Prince on his arrival and poking their heads into his carriage as he started to drive to Barnum's Hotel. Next morning, however, the mayor arrived and escorted the Prince in the mayoral carriage drawn by four prancing black horses to the Great Fair, which this metropolis of the Middle West, then half as big again as lusty young Chicago, was holding to mark its

achievement of civilizing "a wilderness three hundred miles in breadth." The task had taken a century and left little time for the sturdy colonists to polish themselves in the graces of life. But the Prince gave no indication that he thought the mayor, as did some of the mayor's traveled fellow townsmen, was taking a liberty in holding his arm as they drove through the streets to the great wooden amphitheatre in the grounds of the Exhibition where the people were assembled in their tens of thousands; neither did he seem to notice that a smart Yankee drove in the wake of the party advertising his clothing store.

They alighted, and still the friendly mayor kept hold of the royal arm. Proud fathers introduced the Prince to their daughters and never dreamed they were sinning against the canons of royal etiquette. These innocents looked with favor on the spruce figure in his blue coat, light flowing pantaloons, and yellow waistcoat. They noticed how he stroked the tender moustaches which had never felt the rasping touch of any razor — their hearts went out to the handsome young man. The Prince also did homage to beauty as he visited the booths under the tiers of seats where the pride of each congregation sold fried oysters, sandwiches, white candy, and ice cream. One peerless Sylvia, a fair and holy vendor of this favorite American comestible, he made to blush "as pink as her Paris gown" when he slid a coin into her hand for the ice cream she could not tempt him to consume. She observed how, as her royal customer unbent, he stuck his fingers, encased by fashionable kids, into his waistcoat pockets. It was the briefest of idylls. The joking beauty's attention was momentarily withdrawn, Lord Renfrew — maybe catching the Duke's eye, who knows? — lightly said that he had already stayed too long and was depriving her stall of other custom, and he and the suite passed on. Yet this gracious young lady of fiction can claim to be the first of not a few of her compatriots who exerted their fascination

upon the Prince. Even the Duke of Newcastle must have approved the Prince's tactful intuition, though he was less complaisant towards the luncheon in the director's shanty, a buffet stocked with great joints of beef and mutton and buffalo tongues. These, flanked by huge jugs of beer, submitted to the assaults of "ravenous animals," who attacked them with their pocketknives. Since there is no record of the Prince sharing the Duke's disgust, we may take it that he enjoyed the *mêlée* and managed to satisfy an already voracious appetite.

Vigor, self-reliance, independence, were the qualities which St. Louis valued and displayed to the Prince everywhere except in the slave market — no sight for sore eyes. A still greater freedom reigned in Cincinnati. He stayed at the Burnet Hotel, which was "handsomer than our National Gallery," and enjoyed himself at the ball given in his honor, where evening dress was not *de rigueur* and many of the men in the boxes kept their hats on. The anxieties of the suite to obey the Queen's injunctions regarding the incognito waxed on arrival at Pittsburgh, which offered a mayoral welcome to the Prince, the town band marching at the head of the procession from the station to the hotel. Even General Bruce, a man of mystery to the rest of the entourage, was powerless in the face of such exuberant hospitality.

At Washington, reached by way of Baltimore, a sedate atmosphere reigned. On grounds of policy and religion the broad floors of the White House were not swept by the rhythms of dancing feet — much to the regret of the Prince, who would rather have danced on the presidential carpets than have foregone the delight altogether. Still, if President Buchanan did not believe, like his antitype the Pope, in pleasure as a preface to penitence, he managed, like Pio Nono, to get on well with the Prince, whom he estimated to possess a kind heart and a good understanding. And the Prince, on his part, was impressed with the Capitol, with

the Federal Government Offices, so much more dignified, he told his mother, than those in Whitehall, and with the spaciousness of the White House. A Republic, naturally, was not a Monarchy. True, the right of every American citizen to see the President was merely a relic of the custom by which a King, as the father of his people, was always accessible to his subjects, and undeniably a quiet decorum reigned at the Presidential receptions, where men drifted in and out with perfect casualness. But it struck the suite that the habit of expectoration was difficult to reconcile with any sound system of etiquette — a criticism with which the Prince must have agreed.

Everything, however, — the St. Louis Fair, the factories at Pittsburgh, Richmond, where he drank his first mint julep, Philadelphia, in whose streets he mingled with a jubilant crowd celebrating Lincoln's victory at the presidential poll, — was cast into the shade by New York. Here he lived for four days in the light of a furious popularity. The New Yorkers had no intention of being sidetracked by any incognito. The Prince of Wales might call himself Baron Renfrew; for them he was a symbol of the royalty denied to them by their dour creed, and their hearts leaped with joy at being able to express, for once, their frustrated emotions. Such a splendid frenzy New York had perhaps never enjoyed before. The day of his arrival saw the streets packed with people "in receding ocean stretches, swaying together as if with irresistible tidal throb." Better than any official decorations were the flags and streamers hanging from the windows of the pleasant red brick houses which then distinguished the city — "spontaneous, unstudied, inartistic and changeably picturesque symbolings of the wayside," as an eyewitness described them. The tardiness of the Prince's arrival added to the effervescence of demos; no fitter tribute, said New York aloud to itself, could have been paid the Prince of Wales than this democratic presence. He was

late — hours late. And when he did come, the mounted escort — for New York knew better than to have a mere marching band — found it almost impossible to make a way for his carriage. Slowly and amidst much breaking of crinoline, the Prince was borne through the cheering crowds to reach the Fifth Avenue Hotel only at sunset.

“Half a million people worked up almost to madness” — the enthusiasm impressed even the Duke of Newcastle, who attributed it, firstly to the love, amounting almost to passion, which the Americans bore for the Queen, and secondly to their rapidly growing affection for the people of England. Thus the cabinet minister diagnosed the reactions of the people of New York to the glamour of a youthful Prince chosen by birth, and not by the suffrage, to be lord over his fellows. The Prince’s own reaction was a splitting headache, and he could reflect when he retired to nurse it that the triumphs of the delightful profession had to be paid for in expense of spirit. He went to bed, but not to sleep. For bands came to serenade him and played with native zest, until at midnight he appeared on the balcony and acknowledged the honest republican cheers in the Avenue below.

If New York was in danger of forgetting its republicanism, the press took care to point out that such cordiality was republican in its very essence. One man, envisaging politics in a more provincial spirit, churlishly greeted the Prince as he emerged from his hotel the next morning. “You will never be King of England,” he shouted, “if you were to live for a hundred years. The time for kings is past.” He accompanied this inaccurate forecast by putting himself in a pugilistic attitude and was promptly seized by the bystanders — a breach of good manners which New York complacently learned had been committed, not by an American citizen, but by an English sailor. No other *contretemps* marred the visit, though its high point excited animosities probably deeper than any felt by this naïve and indiscreet son of the sea.

For the climax to New York's symphony of welcome was intended to be reached, neither at the review, nor at the "Grand Déjeuner" offered by the mayor, — the Prince, being considered insufficiently versed in public speaking, was not allowed to accept invitations to dinner, — nor at the various institutions which were visited in accordance with the Prince Consort's wishes. The Ball — *that* was to express the essence of the American welcome to the Prince of Wales. Preparations for it were made with extraordinary and lavish care. It was to cost two thousand dollars, and to prevent any solecisms in the matter of dress, the fiat went forth that décolleté must be worn, a decision causing embarrassment to New York ladies, who had not been used to this exposure. Modesty and the requirements of the committee, however, were reconciled by the use of lace, which partially covered the bosoms of many of the lucky maids and matrons who were within the charmed circle of the three thousand, the full number which the Academy of Music could accommodate. Those outside it intrigued, cajoled, stormed. Of these, two unfortunates are said to have committed suicide; others wrote threatening letters to the members of the committee. The chairman, Mr. William H. Havemeyer, was beset, one young and beautiful damsel, not to be denied, forcing her way into his office and there throwing herself on her knees before him, a Greek suppliant. Sour grapes made some declare it to be a mere dollar-and-cents ball — a proof being that the invitation cards were printed like banknotes to prevent forgery. Their criticism was the more plausible since Mr. Willie Duncan, the senior partner of the banking house of Duncan and Sherman, afterwards to smash with a Wall Street éclat, held the post of *ceremoniarius*. The Ball, said these unkindly ones, had sunk to a mere business transaction, Mr. Duncan and the managers finding partners for the Prince exactly as they would have sold him an invoice of dry goods, a bushel of corn, or half-a-dozen penknives.

Such was the anticipation and such the heartache caused by the preparations for the most famous ball in the history of America. All the care lavished upon them, however, came to nothing, owing to the determination of the gate crashers, who to the number of two thousand invaded the premises of the Academy of Music. This resulted in a mass of humanity which may have struck the Prince, as one journalist hoped, by its ineffably democratic maze, but made dancing almost impossible. With difficulty a space was cleared and the Prince led off with Mrs. Morgan, an honor she enjoyed as the wife of the Governor. But the fun had hardly started when an ominous noise broke in on the conversation and the music, there was the sound of crashing of timber, and a portion of the floor gave way under the strain. Amidst incipient signs of panic, the Prince kept quite cool, standing with his hands crossed as if he had not the moment before danced over the spot where now was an abyss. Investigations showed the disaster to be less serious than had been feared. The subsidence was only three feet in depth; the ingenuity of American carpenters who knew how to hustle would repair it in two hours. So to the noise of hammerings the guests, invited and uninvited, lamented their inaction — all except one stalwart fair republican who remarked that even the timber of America revolts against monarchy.

The enforced waiting had its advantage for those who wanted to study the guest of the evening, feature by feature. Nothing could be more remarkable, records one of them, than his resemblance to portraits of the Queen — the same full blue eyes, the same curved mouth, the same retreating chin. Closer observation showed that his mouth was more irregularly turned, the chin receding “not gradually but with great suddenness”; he was no taller, this candid critic averred, than many of the ladies round him. These, not so foolish as to wish to judge royalty by normal standards, found him irresistible. He looked so ingenuous, so bland,

so well-groomed. One thing excited their curiosity — he wore a pair of white gloves several sizes too large. How could this be? The mystery was resolved when he explained to a partner that they were a present from a young lady who, unable to get an invitation to the ball, had besought him to wear them for her sake, so that although she could never meet him face to face, at least these gloves of hers might press his princely fingers. Such tenderness, such gallantry — it was a fairy story, and the Prince a Prince Charming.

This night of nights had still much in store. Taking the Prince early to supper, his hosts found that the hungry tide isolated the royal table and cut off from their objective the waiters bearing the choice gastronomic masterpieces confectioned by the famous Delmonico. After midnight, when the Prince returned to the ballroom, the floor had been repaired. In the hurry of the operation, however, one of the carpenters had been nailed down under the boards. The consensus of opinion amongst the pleasure seekers inclined to his being left entombed till after the ball was over. But the obstinate fellow, refusing to regard his plight as a legitimate risk of his calling, hammered so vigorously that his release became imperative. The Prince meanwhile retired for a moment to his private room, to find everywhere the marks of blood, legitimate anxiety not being set at rest until it was learned that the apparent traces of a crime were only the results of a sudden hemorrhage in Lord Hinchinbrooke's nose, who in his haste to staunch the flow had mistaken the Prince's room for that of the suite.

Bulletins of the royal progress on the dancing floor were dispatched to the *New York Herald* every half hour and appeared in their due order next morning. At 12.30, the crowd round the Prince was so great that he could hardly stir; its members, like the kine immortalized by Mr. W. H. Davies, stood and stared. But the Prince was not going to lose his good humor; at 2.30 A.M. he was "still trying to





LATEST FROM AMERICA.

H. R. H. JUNIOR (TO H. R. H. SENIOR). "NOW, SIR-REE, IF YOU'LL LIQUOR UP AND SETTLE DOWN, I'LL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT MY TRAVELS."

A CARTOON FROM "PUNCH"

1860



dance," and if he found the belle of the ball to be a bright young Miss Russell, who chattered with the vivacious gayety which remained always the key that opened his heart, he distributed his favors fairly, one of the recipients being Miss Roosevelt, a member of the family which had not then made ripples in a bigger pool than that provided by the Four Hundred of Fifth Avenue. And even at 3 A.M. he returned once again to the dance, debonair and hungry for enjoyment, a contrast indeed to the serious mien of his mother's Minister, who did not dance, even in his prose.

One other function in New York reflected some of the social brilliance of the ball — the Prince's attendance at Trinity Church on Sunday morning. For this also elaborate preparations were made. Bishops to the number of more than half a dozen, and the inferior ranks of the hierarchy in proportionate numbers, added solemnity to matins in the parish church of Wall Street, belonging to a branch of the Christian Church of which the stem regards the British sovereign as its lord and governor. Although only ticket holders were admitted and the service was not due to begin till ten-thirty, the building was full at nine o'clock. The congregation passed some of the time admiring the two prayer books prepared for the Prince's use, handsome volumes bound in morocco stamped with the Feathers — the larger, it was whispered, had cost two hundred and fifty dollars. At length the Prince arrived, those in the side pews standing on their seats to see the royal countenance. He walked up the aisle, followed by the inevitable members of the suite. An awkward moment came as the Duke of Newcastle and General Bruce had to pass before him in the pew. The two courtiers managed this difficult manœuvre skillfully, the Prince dropped to his knees, he "laid his face in his hat," and the descriptive powers of the journalists had nothing more to concentrate upon than the progress of a familiar, or at least a staid, liturgy.

It was, indeed, in the words of his Uncle Leopold, a tremendous tour. Not so much in its immediate political effects, for the relations between the two countries came to the brink of war in the following year over the Trent Case, a temporary depression from the Atlantic which made the politicians who discredit heroes and hero worship put up their umbrellas and say, "I told you so." Celtic exuberance, too, inspired the exhortation to the Prince from a New York street corner: "Bedad, sir, and if ye 'll come back in four years' time it's ye we 'll be running for President."

The United States, its élite of wealth and beauty — under the impulse maybe of the Prince's visit, began to revolve not the conquest of Canada as the Duke of Newcastle feared, but the conquest of Europe, which germinated rapidly, and twenty years later resulted in the assault on the fastnesses of St. James's and Mayfair and on the hotels of the Faubourg Saint-Honoré.

The Prince's visit, apart from aiding in this revolution to come, developed his own character and gave him poise and self-confidence. General Bruce might rather foolishly lament that the young man was becoming more impatient of control through the growing sense of his own importance — a quality indispensable to a king and even able, if only sufficiently developed, to carry an otherwise undistinguished individual from the obscurity of a private station to the crest of the stormy sea that we call public life. Yet, although deploring the Prince's inability to mould a conversation upon the ample and solid lines which the Prince Consort knew so well how to fashion, General Bruce admitted the Prince's success "in representation and whilst in movement" — the kinetic attributes of royalty.

Admittedly, the Prince of Wales learned much, very much, in that exhilarating American episode. He learned something of crowd psychology, something of the behavior of men, and of women too, when unfettered by the formulas of

social canons; he learned something more than he already knew about the art of living. Public opinion in England was pleased that America had shown the Heir to the Throne to be no prig, no strait-laced princeling. Gossip no doubt enlarged the Prince's exploits beyond the frontiers of fact. Still, it was known that he had enjoyed himself, that he had proved himself a good shot and had smoked meerschaum pipes on the prairie. *Punch* gave expression to the satisfaction the world always feels in watching youth pay this homage to life. A cartoon depicted the Prince, complete with top hat and goatee, sitting with his feet on the mantel, a half-emptied glass beside him, a cigar in the corner of his mouth. As the Prince Consort, who has entered the room, stands waving away the noxious fumes and not trying to disguise how shocked he is, his son says: "Now, Sir-ree, if you'll sit down and liquor up, I'll tell you all about my travels."

*Punch* enjoyed driving malicious shafts at the Prince Consort. This particularly barbed arrow flew the straighter since it was winged with truth; the jest was the more profane since it hinted so neatly at disagreeable things, at the failure of the father's great scheme of education, at the son's inclination to take his pleasures as they appealed to him, and more subtly at a point particularly distasteful to the Queen — the fact that her son had precedence of her husband.

## V

### A ROMANTIC MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE

OVER-CONSCIENTIOUS parenthood had failed to prevail against the tendencies to which many ancestors had contributed. It had failed, yet out of the very egregiousness of its failure success somehow emerged. The Prince of Wales at the age of twenty was already skilled in kingcraft. Nothing in his scholastic attainments warranted it; his power of literary expression was nil, his free and easy conversation — when out of parental earshot — showed no grasp of academic principles, his ideas of duty were colored by pleasure in the things of sense. Yet in Canada — and elsewhere, when he was given the opportunity — contemporary judges averred he had done well, very well. It was remarkable, also, that “the singularly honest and truthful young man” — “superior-minded” is the typically Victorian epithet applied by a professional pedagogue — felt no rancor, no twinges of such a knot as was tied in the brain of young Œdipus, though his position as his mother’s heir might have the more easily driven him to rebel against excessive paternal interference. He sometimes came near it. But resentment was assuaged by a natural benignity of temperament, and there was this also to be said — that, since a king must be able to keep his balance on the fine edge of discretion, no better school of finesse could have been devised for the Prince of Wales than that ordained by his father; to submit to it for so many years without allowing it to make any doctrinaire scars on mind or morals was a test of character and a triumph of courage.

The Prince Consort's fatal illness began with the chill which he caught on a visit to Cambridge, where he went to lay more educational plans and to strengthen General Bruce's disciplining hand. He was acting according to his lights, and yet blindly. Blindly, too, did it seem that the Fates were acting when, aided by the folly of the doctors and the strange neglect characteristic of the time, which everyone, including the victim and his wife, showed in the early stages of the malady, they slit the finespun and delicate thread of the Prince Consort's life at the age of forty-two. Yet after the first shock courtiers believed that out of evil might come good, if only the Queen could find compensation for the loss of her husband in the prop that her eldest son might be to her throne. The promise of this was bright. By his father's deathbed he threw himself into his mother's arms, declaring that henceforth he would comfort her anguish. His mother reciprocated the gesture, and when she commissioned him to reply to some of the first letters of condolence the omens for a complete understanding between mother and son seemed good.

But the maternal mood soon passed. The early transports of grief, during which she prostrated herself before her dead husband's clothes, were marked by intervals of calm self-control, and in the first days of her retirement to Osborne, whither she had gone before the funeral, the Queen decided that she would suffer no encroachment on her own position, that nothing must be changed in the family circle. Any other course would be disloyal to the Prince Consort's memory. "*No human power*," she wrote in a letter to her Uncle Leopold ten days after the Prince's death, "will make me swerve from what he decided and wished. . . . I apply this particularly as regards the children — Bertie, etc." She would suffer no dictation; and she added: "I live *on* with him, for him, in fact I am only *outwardly* separated from him and *only* for a *time*." The time was to be forty years,

during which the Queen, like so many mothers, never really liked to believe that her eldest son had grown up, and he remained the Bertie who had been so constant an anxiety to his father.

A long time of probation, but it enabled the Prince of Wales to perfect "that quick-witted bonhomie, that instinctive diplomacy, that supreme art of adaptation, which were characteristic of his genius" (the judgment is that of M. Poincaré) — to perfect these qualities under the shadow of his mother, who never went back on the resolve she made when ten days a widow. More, indeed; shut out from active participation in affairs of state, he managed to satisfy the English craving for checks and balances, which has made so many Princes of Wales into leaders of opposition to the Sovereign, by exerting a toleration in social affairs to which the Queen was a stranger, and thus laid the foundations of the freedom sung by the Victorians and enjoyed by us, their posterity. To do this, whilst remaining a dutiful son and treating his mother with filial piety and the respect he owed as the first of her subjects, showed indeed a mastery of finesse. "The little of her confidence," which Lord Tarrington said in 1862 he deserved, he did not obtain, and the Queen never even made the pretense of consulting him — which, as the same eyewitness, a courtier who was something of a journalist, remarked, would have had a great effect on his mind. In a sense the fault was not altogether hers, since it is the weakness of hereditary monarchy that it postulates an heir without making any provision for the exercise of his activities; and supposing anyone had dared to tell the Queen the truth, — and we have it on Lord Tarrington's authority that they did not dare, — it is difficult to see how she could have effectively associated the Prince in the exercise of a sovereignty which is, in its essence, personal.

Still the Prince of Wales could not even live *apropos*, until he had an establishment, or rather two; for it was unthinkable



able that the Heir Apparent, besides having his house in Town, should not also lead the life of a country gentleman — the ample ideal, unchallenged by any Ritz-Carlton or Country Club standards, to which every man of wealth then paid homage. There was no difficulty in providing the Prince with a suitable background. Marlborough House, one of the least successful of Wren's essays in domestic architecture, was set aside for him, and out of the accumulated revenues of the Duchy of Cornwall the seven-thousand-acre estate of Sandringham had been purchased on his behalf by the Prince Consort. His son's coming into the enjoyment of this fine sporting property coincided with the development of the passion for the intensive slaughter of game, and under the Prince's care the coverts, woods, and meres of Sandringham became some of the best-stocked preserves in Norfolk, a county famous for its feathered game. The house, rebuilt in the chattering Tudor of the time, achieved the standard of comfort called solid by the Victorians, which excites the pitying smiles of their posterity. We smile at the naïveté which believed that the life comfortable had reached its zenith in the red plush sofa and the easy-chair — it seems laughable that the Victorians, whose houses were innocent of electricity, who knew nothing of frigidaire except in so far as every room was one in winter, who kept central heating for their conservatories and thought one bathroom for ten bedrooms a liberal allowance, were sometimes perturbed by the idea that they had mistaken comfort for civilization.

This distrust of values did not, however, go very deep. The articulate classes considered on the whole that all was right with the world; both they and the inarticulate showed their optimism in an extraordinary fecundity. Since the world was good, let them people it — to beget a son, many sons, was looked upon as an elementary duty in those robust days before a Lambeth Conference laid down the ethics of

birth-control, when the Psalmist's modest ideal of the quiverful excited a complacent superiority in the breasts of Victorian parents who looked to produce anything up to a baker's dozen. Marriage was the serious business of every young man, the goal of every young woman, who hardly took the trouble to disguise her predatory aims. The few rich bachelors who flourished were satirized for their unrighteous celibacy by the novelists of the period, and the army of the fallen, an army estimated by a social reformer in 1860 at 49,370, guarded the purity of the mid-Victorian home. In the beginning of the decade when the Prince of Wales first began to exert his influence upon society, this host was headed by the gracious figure of Skittles, a lady so important that even the *Times* had to mention her — under the non-committal pseudonym of Anonyma. Her appearance in the Park behind a pair, not of Venus's doves, but of spanking ponies, used to collect crowds of scented dandies round the rails at Hyde Park Corner. There she would draw rein and dally — to the scandal of respectable matrons and their daughters, who found themselves thrust out of the picture by this monocled beauty, and were left to draw consolation from the thought that the respectability of the world is safe so long as the frontiers demarcating the half-world are rigidly enough drawn.

In the case of the Prince, who when a wondering child of seven had been hailed by an orator as the pledge and promise of a long race of kings, an early marriage was a matter of course. It went without saying, too, that the bride must be of royal blood — there had been no precedent of an heir to the throne marrying a commoner since James II raised Anne Hyde from the status of mistress to that of wife, a match for which Londoners should be eternally grateful to that monarch. The Prince realized what was expected of him, and if he answered the Queen's first letter on the subject "in a confused way," he showed no antipathy to the proposal.

At the time, the young man of twenty was enjoying at the Curragh the pleasures as well as the fatigues of the military life, sowing a few wild oats in Dublin from which arose a crop of rumors concerning his loose conduct, rumors that were repeated even by those who disbelieved in them. Freedom was what he most ardently desired, and it was subtly hinted to him that marriage was a concomitant of freedom.

The first steps in the matter had long been taken by the faithful Uncle Leopold. Three years before he had surveyed the field and drawn up a list of seven German princesses eligible to become the Prince's bride. Fifth amongst those names stood that of the Princess Alexandra, whose Teutonic extraction had been neutralized by her upbringing in Copenhagen, where her father resided as heir to the throne of Denmark in virtue of his wife. The Princess Royal, entering with a young married woman's zest into this business of matchmaking, satisfied herself at an apparently fortuitous meeting under the roof of a common relative that the reports of the Princess's charms were not exaggerated, and thenceforth backed this princely damsel in the discreet competition for the very eligible hand of her brother.

After the Prince's first encounter with his bride-to-be, romantically staged in the Cathedral of Speyer, the two older generations, King Leopold and Baron Stockmar, the Queen and the Prince Consort, were able to agree with the Princess Royal's foresight. They made a pair — so much was plain. The Prince was not insusceptible to the Princess's beauty, nor she to his charm. It was, indeed, hailed by the public as a romantic affair. The youth of the bride and bridegroom, his geniality and high spirits, her extreme beauty, unaffected simplicity, and sweetness of character, even her poverty, — £20 to £30 a year had been all her allowance and she declared she would never be able to spend the £10,000 pin money she was to enjoy as Princess of Wales, — everything helped to quicken the popular sympathy.

But though there is much to be said for a marriage of arrangement, based, as Dr. Johnson would have had it, upon shrewd calculation of character and circumstance, — the Victorian “necessities” which Bernal Osborne postulated to be “means, a good temper, and common sense,” — it takes the salt and savor from courtship; it removes the sting of anguish from the wooer still uncertain of winning his mistress’s favors, the rapture of exaltation from the wooed as she receives the offer of her lover’s hand. So the Prince of Wales, in nothing more royal than in his lifelong submission to contradictory loyalties that the three sister deities of the pagan world, connubial Juno, chaste Diana, and Venus, continue to exert over mankind, was fated never to experience the unsullied pleasure of winning a maid by his own exertion and of figuratively kneeling at the feet of his Princess.

Although the decisive steps were taken by the Queen, impelled to action by the knowledge that the Tsar was casting covetous eyes in the same direction for his son and heir, and aided by King Leopold, at whose Palace of Laeken the young pair were formally affianced, the Prince of Wales yet enjoyed some of the reactions of a lover. He did not see much of his bride-elect, for that would have run counter to the canons of such a courtship. But the impressionable Prince was moved by sentiments natural for his youth to remark on his undeserved happiness, and wrote to his former Governor’s widow — General Bruce had died as the result of an infection contracted on the Prince’s Near Eastern tour — that he felt a new interest in everything now that he had someone to live for. It was a conventional, one might call it a bourgeois, reaction, and one which the Prince fortunately soon enough forgot, for the functions of royalty transcend the domestic virtues. And his feelings at the time could not have been deep, since love in the marriage of arrangement should be the result, and not the cause, of union. Yet if his amiable professions as a bridegroom were tinged with con-

vention, his views on the kingly duties of marriage had the strictness, as well as the breadth, demanded by his vocation, and when he came to the throne, pleasure and policy coincided in laying dignities and honors on Queen Alexandra which the queens of other sovereigns had not known.

A royal marriage is always a congenial theme for popular sentiment, and many things helped it on this occasion to overflow. The expansive warmth of the public was a natural reaction to the chilly Court atmosphere of the engagement. It seemed odd, when the Prince's fiancée came to stay with her future mother-in-law, that he should be packed off on a Mediterranean tour; it looked, indeed, as if the Queen meant to exercise to the full the authority which has provided a stock joke against the most canvassed of human relationships. Poor young people — they were only allowed to spend three days together in the whole six months between their betrothal and wedding. This was to be celebrated, not in the pomp that Westminster Abbey should frame, but at St. George's Chapel; a widow's grief, men and particularly women said, was interfering with a mother's joy, with a Queen's duty towards her subjects: the first mutterings of the criticism at the monarch's seclusion began to make themselves heard.

Such impressions heightened the hymeneal enthusiasm that seized the whole country. Poets, artists, musicians, took their cue, if not their inspiration, from the popular theme, made still more popular by the political feeling against Prussia beginning to form in mid-Victorian hearts. Danish quadrilles were the fashion; the Guards marched to a Fantasia on Danish national melodies, and the bride-elect, in whose veins flowed good German blood, was transformed into a heroine of Norseland. Tennyson hailed her as the sea kings' daughter; *Punch*, more bold and picturesque, as

. . . the golden-haired  
Of the Vikings of old.

Not that John Bull, at that time weltering in self-esteem as he compared his own solid industrial state with the quaking fabrics of the Continental monarchies, had any particular fondness for his Danish cousins. But he was acquiring an antipathy for his German relatives which the tendencies of the Court did nothing to lessen, and, a bit of a swaggerer himself in those happy days of "Pam," he resented the attitude of Prussia towards little Denmark — Prussia already preparing to sow the dragon's teeth by annexing the Duchies and so raising a crop that was to be harvested half a century later. The royal match came, therefore, very appositely, and the twinges at the first rattling of the German sabre helped to excite the national fervor to a white heat.

In any case the royal couple would have been sure of a triumphant greeting as they drove through London from the Southwark terminus of the South Eastern Railway to Paddington on the Saturday before their wedding — the winning comeliness of the slender bride was sufficient for that. Her sweetness of expression enraptured the crowds thronging the line of route followed by the royal procession; even in the rough shouting of the Borough slum dwellers journalists detected the unmistakable note of loyalty. When the royalties reached London Bridge the cheering attained a volume that frightened a Princess accustomed to the quiet of Copenhagen. Here, before the triumphal arch which excited universal admiration in its gorgeous white and gold and purple velvet, the procession was held up for half an hour. It seemed impossible that a way could be cleared through the City, where the old-fashioned constables of the Corporation in their top hats and swallow-tailed coats were utterly at a loss and only irritated the crowd by using their truncheons. Mounted police (in the words of *Punch*, a mounted policeman) helped by the escort of Life Guards, managed in the end to pilot the cortège to the Mansion

House. At this nodal point the populace swarmed round the royal carriage, many in their transports seizing and kissing the Princess's hand. Already she excited a "passionate affection" in the hearts of Londoners. Men noticed that she compared well in beauty with those paragons, the Empresses of Austria and of the French. They noticed, too, that she had a royal courage. As an officer of the Blues tried to rescue the carriage from the press of people, his charger caught a foreleg in the wheel. The animal began to plunge and threatened to fall with his rider. Only the Princess's presence of mind in disengaging the horse's hoof with her hand prevented an accident, and the officer, recovering his seat, bowed low in recognition.

If the mismanagement galled the Prince's love for ceremonial, the fact that the pageantry was skimped, that the half-dozen carriages must have been "the very dregs of that singularly ill-appointed establishment known as the Royal Mews of Pimlico," and that the horses looked as shabby as their harness, lent spontaneity to the general rejoicings. The Prince, exhilarated by this frenzy of applause, submitted to the intoxicating delight of the profession. For three hours he and the Princess progressed through the beflagged and decorated streets, past St. Paul's, which on the wedding evening was to be precariously illuminated with the newfangled electric light, under Temple Bar, through Trafalgar Square, and down muddy Piccadilly, where the mansions of the great were festooned with bunting. In Hyde Park 17,000 volunteers, still a butt for the profane, stood for the military prowess of the Princess's adopted country. And not till five o'clock on that early March afternoon did the Prince and Princess, with her father and mother and sister, reach Paddington. The special train, driven by Lord Caithness, a young blood who in those days before sports cars indulged a passion for speed on the footplate, took them to Slough, where they alighted and drove in the

gathering dusk through Eton and Etonian cheers to Windsor Castle. Under the impulse of that paroxysm of a people's loyalty the Prince tried to persuade his mother to confer a baronetcy upon the Lord Mayor and knighthoods on the Sheriffs. But the Queen, all the more sombre perhaps by contrast with the joyousness of her subjects, refused; a letter expressing her gratification, she thought, would be enough.

Sorrow was her portion, mourning her daily bread. She could not for a single day lay aside her sadness. In vain, ministers and courtiers tried to persuade her to doff her crêpe and weeds for the wedding; she felt herself unable even to take any part in the ceremony, except as a spectator from the royal gallery. Still the service in St. George's — precedent mongers had to go back to the year 1122 to justify the Prince Consort's choice — was not without its splendor. Nine hundred pairs of eyes belonging to the élite of the kingdom approved the dignified bearing of the Prince in his Garter robes as he entered the Chapel preceded by the gayly dressed butterflies of a rococo feudalism, by heralds, pursuivants, and kings-at-arms. To the strains of the wedding march in *Athalie* he walked to the chancel steps, then turned and made a low reverence to his mother — a princely gesture. The bride, pale and nervous but surpassingly lovely, joined her groom, and her bridesmaids, most nervous of all, mistaking her curtsy to the Queen as the cue for their kneeling, for the moment filled the Prince with embarrassment. But he quickly regained his air of "serious, reverent dignity" as the Archbishop began to read the familiar liturgy with its frank apology for the married state, though neither he nor the Princess returned audible answers to the vital questions.

Very moving was the youth of the royal pair standing amidst the group of elderly ecclesiastics; and moving, too, the sadness of the Queen as she surveyed her son and daughter-in-law and the other members of her young family; amongst



them a grandchild, the Princess Royal's son, standing by his mother's side, a fair-haired child of four in kilts, destined one day to become Kaiser William II. The Queen's face was lined with grief; it was difficult to believe that the sovereign who had reigned for over a quarter of a century was only forty-three years of age. When the choir began to sing the Prince Consort's own hymn tune, with Jenny Lind's bell-like voice taking up the alternate verses, tears overcame her and forced her to withdraw out of sight, the poignancy of her sorrow bringing a corresponding moisture to the eyes of her unsentimental Prime Minister. She returned more composed, and when the ceremony was at an end, and the married pair stood hand in hand bowing low to their sovereign, she answered the salutation with a gesture of blessing rather than a ceremonious acknowledgment.

To the Prince, standing there on the threshold of manhood, history unfolded itself in the future tense. The Queen, whose very presents were in the name of the Prince Consort and herself, — jewelry and plate he had providently designed for the occasion, — saw yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow as bound up with her husband's memory. Others, also, could not forget the past, and as they contemplated the historic scene they trembled for the future. What sort of example would the young man, now being launched on a dangerous sea, show to society? In this matter, at least, he was "almost omnipotent for evil and good." Some echoes of thunder rumbled amidst the loyal felicitations which Delane's paper offered him. The record of the Princes of Walès was a sorry one, "for scarcely a day or an hour was there any reasonable hope that the unhappy man who last bore this title should give his heart, or his duty, to the Princess whom a vicious bargain had drawn into this pitfall." After casting this stone at George IV, the *Times* looked back on the long line of Princes who had occupied the antechamber to the throne and concluded that there was some fatality

in the series so unhappily begun by Edward of Carnarvon, that "the heirdom of a great empire was incompatible with goodness and common sense, with loyalty, filial feeling and truth" — a conclusion to be countered by cherishing the expectation that the true Prince of Wales had only now come.

This was being solemn with a vengeance, and the Prince, whatever Delane might say, had no intention of being solemn. But if he wished for an antidote, it was before him on his dressing table at honeymoon Osborne. There, sent by the Queen, was a copy on satin of Tupper's Greeting to Alexandra, "our most welcome wand'rer," a poem with no sinister shadows, a joyous Ode : —

O happy heart of England,  
Shout aloud and sing land !

which, the wits declared, almost brought its author a knight-hood.

## VI

### THE POTENT EXAMPLE

THE Prince may not have read the bourgeois misgivings of the *Times*. But *Reynolds's Newspaper* elaborated the same theme with radical outspokenness and he was a constant reader of that journal, which castigated privilege Sunday by Sunday. It was ominous of criticism, based on the canon that finds fault with a thing because it is not something else, from which the Prince of Wales was to suffer most of his life. At first he smarted under the lash, and it is recorded how he told a friend five years after his marriage that the newspapers had called him everything from a drunkard to a Papist; if only a quarter, he said, of what was written about him were true, he would be one of the most remarkable criminals of modern times. But he had the character not to allow himself to be deflected from his path by his cross-grained and often pharisaical critics. They took little account of the many parts he had to play, as son, as husband, and above all as Prince, who, "if he wishes to shine in the perfection of his vocation, must be loving and beloved."

He gave his instincts rein from the first; he was born to inherit a kingdom of this world and he meant to become acquainted with every feature of it; he did no treason to his youth by curbing liveliness and high spirits. These found one outlet in sport, naturally a serious occupation for a future king of England. His most intimate friends, men like Sir Frederick Johnstone and Henry Chaplin, were mighty hunters who thought in terms of the horse. It would misbecome the Prince of Wales to be a Nimrod; but, if never a first-rate horseman, he showed a proper boldness when riding to

hounds. We have a glimpse of him with the Royal Buckhounds, resolutely riding in the van and wearing his hunting kit with a carelessness "that would have vexed the soul of his tailor." He was at home in the Shires, where he considered a string of fourteen hunters not less than his needs. Once, with the Blankney, he pounded the whole field when he jumped a very large stile in a bullfinch which Harry Chaplin, the Master, in vain shouted at him to decline. To lead the Belvoir was another feat which cost him three falls in a seven-mile run. A tumble on another day was more serious as being the preface to an idyll duly noted by the gossips. Hunting he loved not only for the pleasure of chasing the fox. The camaraderie of the hunting field, its care-free liberty, the grace of its Dianas — all appealed to him. He was bold, too, at the hunting tea, with its poached eggs that whet, rather than blunt, appetite. So perfect days, none the worse for wind and rain, mellowed by port, came to an end with whist, a difficult game in which the Prince knew his deficiencies. His ambition was to have a rubber with Lord Henry Bentinck, the greatest whist player in Europe, but his charm failed upon Disraeli's eccentric friend. Lord Henry, not less famous as a master of hounds than as a card player, returned a grim answer to the Prince's conversational gambit at a meet: "Yes, sir," said the ex-Master, "I was king of the county once, but they deposed me, as happens to crowned heads at times." "I don't think he will trouble me any more to-day" was the subsequent comment of this odd character.

Shooting, always the Prince's passion, could be indulged at Sandringham, and in the close season the trapped pigeon drew him and his friends to the purlieus of Shepherd's Bush, which has ceased even to dream of its once fashionable vogue. This diversion earned him some unpopularity, for public opinion, never very logical in its discrimination of the degrees of cruelty in sport, thought it unfair to the pigeons.

A timid pigeon fastened in a trap  
At which, when loosened, they might stand and shoot  
Was sport well suited for strong men . . .

wrote one satirist. There was also polo, then a comparatively sedate pastime. But games with their spirit of emulation are antipathetic to those who look to wear the purple in becoming dignity. Napoleon suffered defeat more philosophically on the battlefield than on the chessboard; a duck's egg, or a fizzle, may form the nucleus of a complex in a royal mind round which collects all sorts of harmful inferiorities. So the Prince gave his heart to no games, though he dallied mildly with croquet, preferring this on his own confession to golf. Apart from sport, racing, which his mother regarded as worse than frivolous, made a framework within which his activities were coördinated for half the year.

All this was life, yet only a part of life. It was the husk, the very pleasant husk, of the kernel which lay in London. Here was the Prince's real task; from Marlborough House he was to set the example, potent for good and evil, which caused the Chadbands and the Pecksniffs to sniff and hold up their hands — a tremendous business, which, in George Eliot's phrase, meant wrestling with world-notorious dragons. There was the dragon of caste, raising aristocratic eyebrows at Jews and artists, financiers and Americans; the dragon, too, of respectability, a dull beast with the eyes of a Saint Anthony for evil, seeing the dance of the Devil's jackals everywhere, in bright eyes, round the beaded brim of the champagne glass, in the smoke of the cigar, on the green baize of the card table; grimmest of all, there was the obstinate Sabbatarian Fafnir to be converted by the compelling force of personality.

Compelling it was, the more so since he and his Princess concealed it under the cloak of naturalness. There was nothing stiff or studied in either of them; they were just a happy young couple carrying the tapers of pleasure as they

dined and danced and went to the play. They were like children; never quiet for a single evening, they could not live without amusement, said one of their entourage. Amongst the journalists to spread abroad the stories of the Princess's charms was George Meredith — her popularity, opined that subtle student of the incomprehensible sex in the *Ipswich Journal*, was largely due to the interest taken by her in everything which interests other people. These interests took them everywhere, even to *Pepper's Ghost*, then imparting thrills to the Town by means of an illusion which has since become a commonplace of the conjurer's art. Rumor made the Queen shake her head and declare that her son and daughter-in-law, if they went on as they were going, would become as common as the Cambridges.

It looked as if the next generation meant to follow the same unconventional example when their son and heir arrived long before he was due and only five hours after his mother had been skating on the ice at Frogmore. He entered the world unceremoniously, unattended by any cabinet minister; no layette was ready for the royal infant; there was not even a homely monthly nurse to console his first despoite. Only when British matrons learned that the baby was a seven-months child did they cease their *sotto voce* confidences at the mismanagement in high places. But Mr. John Bull laughed and said he was sure the Prince of Wales was "just the man to be pleased at having sold the ceremony folk."

John Bull, the real John, liked the young man. He liked to hear the Prince call the modest Christian of Denmark "Father," he liked him for his Danish sympathies and for receiving Garibaldi when he visited London — a gesture which made the Queen angry, as it pleased the proletariat. The creation of a "Prince's Party" was even talked of in the clubs as a thing probable and almost desirable — so strongly did feeling run against the Queen's German proclivities, to

which was now added a strange partiality for Scotland and its people. He might be rather wild, but youth would be served and no reasonable man expected the Prince of Wales to be a saint. When he broke down in his speech at the Royal Academy banquet, the knowing attributed it to too much champagne rather than too little inspiration. Men were men in those days and thought no worse of an occasional obeisance to Bacchus. Did not Bismarck years later say that Englishmen had lost their pluck since they had ceased to drink? So when an editor and justice of the peace heard that the Prince, after dining with the Blues at Windsor, had perforce spent the night in barracks and returned home at six in the morning, he could add the comment in his diary that he thought none the worse of him for that, though he might wonder whether the Princess shared his philosophic view. But then Sir William Hardman, this particular John Bull, was not one of those who had tried to win the Prince's favor and been soured by his failure. Much of the gossip which filtered through to middle-class households had its source in the "critical and fault-finding Peris at the gates" of Marlborough House, who roamed disconsolate just outside the circle of Albert Edward's court."

The Prince was the very reverse of a Jaques; the only people denied entrance into his circle were the fools. Dullness, in whatever dress, was the enemy, *esprit* (or else high spirits) the passport which received an additional visa for beauty or wealth, according to the sex of the holder. It was a catholic circle, holding the oddest contrasts. Very early he drew the Rothschilds inside it, a gesture which caused not only Gentiles to raise their brows, for there were social traditions that made the Sephardic Jews look askance at their Ashkenazic brethren. As arbiter of the elegancies the Prince took the Duke of Hamilton. A great noble like the Duke of Sutherland came near his heart for the splendor of his entertainments at Stafford House, for his jolly house

parties at Dunrobin, where the guests and the white grouse shared the general liveliness, and not least for his love of all kinds of engines. Politics he talked shrewdly with Mr. Gladstone as they sat round the dinner table or rode together in the Park; there was always a sympathy between them that transcended the difference in their ages if only because Gladstone, the stoutest of Tories in his attitude toward royalty, was able to understand the unescapable power exercised by the mystery of sex over this descendant of a hundred kings.

Never was there a Prince more at home in all worlds. He went to the studio parties, the first of their kind which Leighton, whom he had known in Rome, used to give on Saturday evenings during the season at his house on Campden Hill and later in the Moorish palace he built for himself on the southern confines of Holland Park. At these "Buckner's aristocratic Album Beauties" rubbed shoulders with literary and musical lions. Trilby ought to have sung there. Leighton's empire lay outside Bohemia, one of the few countries the English have never wanted to annex. Even the greenroom atmosphere of patchouli and grease paint has never completely corroded the aspiration after respectability that is innate in Anglo-Saxondom, and the Prince could associate with the Bancrofts and later sup with Irving at the Lyceum without anyone thinking it odd. Turning from the stage to the church, the Prince found friends amongst prelates and parsons; Bishop Wilberforce of Oxford, a wit who could play a pretty rubber of whist; Dean Stanley, whose views were so broad that Dr. Pusey refused to preach from the Abbey pulpit where the Dean might as well call himself a Mohammedan as a Christian; the sporting Devonshire parson, Jack Russell, an octogenarian fox hunter who gave Sealyhams to a world which has gratefully accepted the gift and forgotten the donor.

Marlborough House caught the shoals of the distinguished whilst bringing to the surface the individual character like



Dr. Quin, a homeopathic by profession, a jester by inclination. The Prince's was a veritable Saint Peter's net which drew up all except the bores. And in the early summer, when the Prince and Princess with their young family retired to the suburban retreats of Chiswick House, society followed them until the carriages that rolled through Hammer-smith gave an early foretaste of the traffic problem on that Broadway. There in the house built by Kent, but modernized and actually having two bathrooms on the ground floor, intimate dinner parties were followed by strolls in the alleys gardens. Or these would be thrown open of an afternoon to wider circles, and an *olla podrida* would collect its hundreds of mid-Victorian worthies who sauntered on the lawns under the disdainful noses of the Roman Emperors, whose busts the classical taste of the previous century had set down with a ruined Greek temple amongst these Thames-side retreats. Chiswick House, one of the Prince's most delicious extravagances, afterwards became a madhouse and now moulders as a municipal possession amidst dingy streets of bricks and mortar, wanly dreaming of the glories which it last knew when Edward VII was a young man and enjoyed his lusty youth.

All this was a formal world. There lay another outside it which he tasted with his boon companions, Lord Charles Beresford being their chief. The Prince shared mildly in the impulse that sent a Harun-al-Rashid through the by-ways of Baghdad, or a Prince Hal to the taverns of Eastcheap, a *nostalgie de la boue* for which many votaries of the delightful profession stand as shining examples. His partiality for the music halls, then enjoying the vogue of novelty and held responsible by solemn persons for the depravity corrupting all classes, instead of being looked upon as an amiable trait in a Prince who felt so sure of himself that his dignity was safe everywhere, stamped him amongst the Pharisees as a lover of low life.

Undoubtedly the gilded youth of the period were wild. They drank, they gambled, and wasted their substance. They were coarser in their pleasures than are the young men of to-day who seek diversion in female company of their own class. Lord Aylesford, a friend of the Prince's, might amuse himself and his party on their return from Hampton Races by throwing bags of flour over humble pedestrians as his four-in-hand drove through Hammersmith. It pleased the wild Lord Hastings to arrange for the lights to be suddenly turned off in a Haymarket dancing hall as a sackful of sewer rats were set loose to scamper about the floor, whilst the ladies of the Town shrieked and showed Aubrey Beardsleyish legs from under frilled petticoats. From such cruder exploits the Prince might hold himself aloof. Yet prudent mothers, like the Duchess of Cleveland, would warn their sons, as that great lady warned the future Lord Rosebery, to keep themselves from the whirlwind that was supposed to blow round the Prince of Wales and "to have torn to tatters many fine fortunes and fair names."

The shadows were darkened by the periodicals, written by university wits whose literary antecedents lay in the eighteenth century. The *Tomahawk's* edge habitually ran round the royal scalp. A pleasure-loving prince was a tempting prey for the satirist in days when convention did not prevent anything except the incense of flattery being burned before royal altars, and he provided the *Tomahawk* with subjects for quips and cartoons innumerable. He was nearly gored to death when two stags felled his horse as he followed the magnificently uniformed imperial hunt at Compiègne — and the *Tomahawk* had the heartlessness to jeer. Nothing escaped its notice, and it professed to be terribly shocked that he should be partial to Madame Schneider, a loose-limbed and loose-tongued acrobat, to the extent of taking the Princess to see her in Paris when they were on their way to Egypt in the winter of 1868.

That visit was a fertile source of merriment. Mr. Poole's latest fashion, it punningly suggested, should be called the "Nihil Fit" and dedicated to His Royal Highness. If the *Tomahawk* smiled at his dandyism, — and the Serapis costume invented by the Prince in Egypt ultimately became the familiar round evening coat known to nine tenths of the world as a "smoking," — it indulged the raucous laughter of puns at the indulgences which had not made Sir William Hardman blush. The *Sphinx* declared in its pages that not ambition, but love of pleasure, was likely to be his undoing. A cartoon showing the Prince abandoning Britannia and her weeping lion for a houri echoed in lighter vein its more direct attacks on the weaknesses which, as Louis XIV sagely observed, princes only shared with other men. George IV still stood as the perfect example of a royal libertine, and it took no great flight of fancy for the *Tomahawk's* cartoonist to show the ghost of that monarch beckoning to the Prince, who cries, "I'll follow thee!" whilst the horrified Horatio of Sir William Knollys, the wise Comptroller of his Household, tries to hold him back. The reverse of the picture appears in another, where a charming figure dabs rouge on her cheeks as she makes ready for the Buckingham Palace Ball, for which an invitation lies with a rosary on her dressing table. Well may her maid look horrified, for she can see upon the sofa a cigar case with the Prince of Wales's feathers, even though she be unaware of the artist's caption, "She stoops to conquer."

Those who let off those squibs did not mean them to shake the monarchy; they were only intended to crackle in the clubs of St. James's and the drawing-rooms of Mayfair. Their splutterings perhaps should be called spiteful rather than malicious, for when the Mordaunt case plunged the Prince into a real scrape the *Tomahawk* stood up as one of his defenders. And while reprobating his wish to follow his wicked old great-uncle's ghost, it sympathized with the

ennui visited upon him by the shadow of his father's example. "I always have to say in my speeches that I want to walk in my father's footsteps, but I don't" — so the *Tomahawk* made him remark at the laying of the foundation stone of the Albert Hall in 1867. Poor young Prince, people whispered, thus held in the leading strings of a defunct sire! Yet he had feared and loved his father, and when the Memorial in the Royal Horticultural Gardens was unveiled, one charming woman noticed how he looked the saddest of all his family, the incarnation of piety. It was a hard saying of Christ's that the dead should bury their dead, but the Queen's desire to commemorate her husband bordered on monomania, and against such exaggerated mourning the divine apophthegm must have been aimed.

The Prince, in the ruminations recorded by our humorist, hinted mildly at the unreasonableness of widowhood. "My royal mother is going to lay the foundation stone. I wish she would perform her duty to the living as well as she does to the dead. I think Knollys writes me rotten speeches. I believe he gets them from Maunder's *Biographical Treasury*. Lots of people have taken boxes because they are afraid of offending my mother. If we say it's all in memory of my father, Parliament will have to grant the money." There were grumbles, nevertheless, though no economist — and this now extinct species flourished amazingly in the sixties — could gainsay a courtier's argument that the Prince Consort by his premature demise had saved the country, on the strictest actuarial calculations, some £600,000.

On many counts the Queen was unpopular, and not least for her gloom. But most people saw no ill in the Prince for being as happy as proverbially he had the right to be; the few believed that if he pursued pleasure unduly, the reason lay partly in the fact that he was denied a legitimate union with Work. At such ceremonial functions as the Queen's seclusion brought him, he wore the kingly mantle with

dignity. Its folds always lay about him appropriately. The Grand Turk, a connoisseur in royal deportment, delighted so in his entertainment by the Prince, on his visit to England, that on bidding Albert Edward farewell he shed tears. The Prince would lead a royal quadrille so that courtly grace more than compensated for lack of inches, and lay a foundation stone as if he enjoyed this masonic function. His virtuosity soon included the difficult art of making after-dinner speeches, for he learned from his first failure at the Royal Academy Banquet never to trust to the memory which so treacherously betrayed him on that occasion.

No one could seriously question the popularity in society of a prince who was light in hand, able to give the impression that he took particular delight in conversing with the person he was talking to at the moment, who loved above all else a romp and would join in a country dance at a Chiswick House party from which the ladies emerged with their dresses torn to tatters. If only he could find work, continuous and responsible work, ministers said amongst themselves, all would be well. Some did their best to help the Prince to obtain it. He might go as Viceroy to Ireland, where the people would appreciate his winning manners; or be admitted to share the burden of reading the dispatches which flowed in an endless stream upon his mother. He might begin at the bottom and work his way through the routine of the government offices, or sit on the India Council, or be a real soldier.

All sorts of suggestions were put before the Queen. She sighed in her grief and uttered forebodings of an early demise that would at once fill the cup of the Prince's responsibility. Till then she must bear the weight of her crown alone. It was the penalty of her position. She "entirely sympathized," for instance, with her son's wish to see the cabinet boxes. But as Queen — and in this she was surely right — she wrote that she could not help "objecting to the

principle of separate and independent communication between the Prince of Wales and the Government."

People did not always see this. Very early in her widowhood Lord Clarendon offended when he said sardonically that even the Prince Consort would have found some regular occupation to keep the Heir to the Throne out of harm's way, whether as "Regent of Scotland, a clerk in the Audit Office, or Bailiff of the Home Farm." That in the face of his mother's rather difficult attitude the Prince remained, in her words, a warm-hearted, dutiful, and amiable son is a test of self-control no less marked than his refusal to model himself on Polonius's pattern at the behest of Puritans who saw the evil genie in the fold of a skirt or in the blue smoke of an Egyptian cigarette.

To maintain this effacement when surrounded by the adulation of an indulgent public opinion was not always easy. Wherever he and his Princess went, they received ovations. They moved amidst paroxysms of loyalty that drove plebeian souvenir hunters to fight for the crusts from the royal tables; if he went to the play, the audience, as likely as not, would greet him with shouts of "Long live the future King of England," when he would acknowledge the plaudits and then retire modestly behind the curtain of his box. But the atmosphere of the theatre, always congenial to one whose profession was a sublimation of the play actor's, soon caused him to escape from self and to laugh with the loudest.

The Prince, though young and regarding the theatre purely in its proper light as a place of entertainment, was a much more serious playgoer than any of his family have since proved to be. He followed the work of the Bancrofts, in the production both of contemporary and of classical comedy, with the closest interest. The sixties and seventies were a brilliant epoch in the history of the English stage, when playwrights had not yet been taught by Ibsen to

preach, and actor-managers were not merely tradesmen. Irving, who came nearest to being this, established his reign at the Lyceum on a capital provided by the extraordinary success of *The Bells*, which ran for the unprecedented number of one hundred and fifty performances. Even if the Prince, as is very probable, never opened a volume of Shakespeare after he had done with tutors, he had the art of the poet laid before him by Ellen Terry and Irving, a privilege denied to his predecessor and Shakespeare's patron, the Virgin Queen.

Not that the theatre of the Prince's early manhood was in the least highbrow. It was the resort of boisterous and happy people, who had not learned in blinking at the films to repress their feelings, who realized that stage and audience made up a spiritual entity, that they were as necessary to the actors as the actors to them. Criticism was free. The Prince's remark on one occasion, "Can anyone tell me what this d——d play is about," — which, thanks to his deep voice, carried better than the stage dialogue, — was only considered unduly frank by reason of the emphatic epithet. And since diversion was the objective, this might be enjoyed on whichever side of the footlights it presented itself. Once at the Gaiety a lady of portly dimensions proved too great a burden for her stall, which gave way under her as she sat down upon it. The Prince showed delight in peals of royal laughter. No practical joke could have been funnier, and in spite of his upbringing he shared this common Victorian taste. It was indecorous thus to draw amusement from the discomfiture of another; it would assuredly not have amused the Prince Consort, who complained that Englishmen lacked the philosophic training which enables a man to subordinate detail to principle, the part to the whole. Why should a rational man be diverted because a chair collapses?

The Prince probably did not seek afterwards to justify his laughter on the ground that it was an instinctive reaction

to the mechanical routine of habit against which nature is always protesting. Any society which is too sure of itself must be laughed out of its assurance if it will escape death; any lady too secure in her portliness must learn the lesson, or at least be an example to others, that nothing is safe in an inexorable world — not even a stall at the Gaiety. Neither did a versifier who has recorded the incident give it any philosophic content: —

Did she mean an obeisance and try to evince  
A loyal devotion on seeing the Prince?  
Who knows? But she fell through the stall and was floored,  
While as some consolation how Royalty roared.

It was hard work, shaking the Victorians out of their self-satisfaction. French life and French society helped to give him ideas, to strengthen his enthusiasm for the cosmopolitan culture lacking in London. Many months were never allowed to pass without seeking the inspiration which Paris dispenses with sovereign hand. There he owed much to his velvet-mannered friend, Napoleon III, a born Bohemian and self-taught king; much, too, he owed to his other self, the Duke of Lancaster, granted the accolade of a *boulevardier* by Parisian journalists who had the vision to foresee that he would become the cynosure of Europe, the perfect man of fashion. How stupid, dingy, dull, already seemed other royalties in comparison with this Prince who wore his incognito so joyously! In his own London he assumed it when drawn by the excitement of a fire. Then he might don his fireman's clothes at the room he was said to rent for that purpose above the butcher's shop in Watling Street, and with the Duke of Sutherland take part in the fight against the flames, so sympathetically did his taste for the spectacular and the dramatic react to sensations which asbestos and electricity and the motor fire engine have largely banished from our cities. He was a true



fireman in that he loved the fires which he helped to fight, and loved them none the less if they kept him from his bed. For he was in this matter *un Prince vraiment chic*, as the aide-de-camp of a foreign monarch admitted in his cups at a Mansion House banquet, a really fashionable Prince who went to bed late and had no fondness for the habits of early rising by which the Victorians thought to earn the crown God has promised to the vigilant, habits that made it incumbent on those who already wore crowns to rise with the sun.

So passed the early years of the Prince's married life. He was a pious son, an affectionate husband, a complacent father, who liked nothing better, as he declared, than "a quiet evening at home with the Princess and the children." At the same time the gadfly critics who had laughed at the connubial atmosphere of Queen Victoria's court now buzzed on a higher note because the ménage at Marlborough House was modeled on other lines. Detractors called out defenders.

"A spendthrift," said those.

"Would you have the Representative Man of the Richest Country in the world" (John Bull talked like that in his Victorian prime) "a sordid and penurious niggard?" said these.

"What about his friends?" they sniggered.

"On the contrary," the loyal ones replied, "he manages to steer between the Scylla of frigid etiquette and the Charybdis of low company with remarkable success."

"And his gallantries?" the detractors asked, firing their heaviest shot.

"Can't he talk to a pretty woman without being thought to be in love with her? Is he alone of all men only to speak to the uglier and stupider section of the fair sex?" The answer did not prevent the popularity of the Princess from being exploited at his expense. Her health was rumored to be failing, her decline the result of chagrin. No one seems

to have attributed it to the strain of incessant childbearing on a young woman in her early twenties. In this matter, at least, the Prince had the common ideas of his age.

Charity prevailed so long as Slander could only whisper its insinuations. But when towards the end of 1869 it began to be known that the Prince of Wales's name was to be introduced into a suit for divorce, as squalid in its facts as it was distinguished in the parties implicated, mid-Victorian society shivered to its backbone with alarm and anticipation, and prepared to lose no details of the disclosures which were to be made in the witness box.

The Mordaunt case presents as poignant a story as any that strew the dusty records of the Divorce Court. Harriet Moncrieffe was a girl who seemed born to enjoy everything the world could give. She had great personal attractions, she possessed the liveliness and charm that are more than beauty, she belonged to a family as old and proud as any in Scotland. Her parents were favorites at Court and the Queen's neighbors at Balmoral. One of her sisters, the Duchess of Athole, was a lady in waiting. The Prince had known Harriet as a girl, and before her marriage she had enjoyed the hospitality of the Prince and Princess at Marlborough House. If her volatile temperament had little in common with her husband's stiff and serious character, the match from a worldly point of view was well planned, and Lady Mordaunt appeared admirably fitted to play the part in the Shires and in London which the wealth and social position of her husband demanded. But she proved unable, either in character or in health, to withstand the strain and the temptations of the life which she had to lead. Two miscarriages developed signs of hysteria. The birth of her first child, twenty-six months after her marriage, turned this into madness, and the woman who had been a reigning beauty sunk into a dementia that made her, in the words of one of her attendants, hardly better than a beast of the

field. If the age had known more about nervous diseases, particularly in their relation to pregnancy, and if her husband had been less possessive and more understanding, the stark tragedy might never have happened.

It is unnecessary to go over an old case of which the main plot lies outside our theme. It is sufficient to say that Sir Charles Mordaunt had warned his bride against continuing the acquaintance with the Prince of Wales. He hinted darkly of things he had heard to the derogation of the Prince's character and, interpreting the wifely duty of obedience in its strictest sense, expected that she would bow to his will. Lady Mordaunt had the spirit, or the unwisdom, to disobey such an arbitrary injunction. Sir Charles knew this. He also knew that she was on friendly terms with Lord Cole and Sir Frederick Johnstone, both of whom moved in the Marlborough House set. But he suspected no ill when she bore him a daughter who was to be the cause of a great scandal.

The prematurely born infant, who weighed only three and one-half pounds at birth and appeared to be blind, excited a pathological state in the mother which led her to confess to her husband that she had deceived him. Her horror at having, as she quite mistakenly supposed, brought a blind and shamefully diseased infant into the world, led her to the most extravagant self-abasement, and she made herself the scapegoat for sins which, if they had basis in fact, far exceeded those of which she was guilty. Confessions prompted by such an impulse, as spiritual doctors have always been aware and their medical brethren now also admit, must be received with the greatest caution. The child was not her husband's — to this her unhinged mind continually reverted. On the third of March, three days after her delivery, she first told him of the nightmare which oppressed her. She had sinned, sinned "in open day," her wickedness was complete. That he did not take it

seriously only unsettled her the more — a common reaction of the mentally deranged.

Five days later she was more precise.

“Charlie,” she said to her husband, “you are not the father of that child. Lord Cole is its father and I am the cause of its blindness.”

Thereupon the nurse whose hand she had been holding left the room, and the rest of the incident is given in the evidence of the petitioner. Lady Mordaunt lay silent for a quarter of an hour. Then she burst into tears and made the statement that implicated the heir to the throne.

“Charlie,” she said, “I have been very wicked. I have done very wrong.”

“Who with?” he asked.

“With Lord Cole, Sir Frederick Johnstone, the Prince of Wales, and others,” she replied.

The most curious feature of the case is that Sir Charles Mordaunt, though he afterwards declared that there was nothing in her manner to indicate insanity, continued to write to his mother-in-law for another three days in his usual strain of anxious solicitude. Only after that time do his suspicions appear to have been aroused. Then he began to search for corroboration and in a locked desk found a valentine from the Prince, with one of his handkerchiefs, and a number of letters. From that moment he believed in his wife’s confession.

When the case came on for trial, the Prince found himself in a difficult position. He was not made a party to the suit, whilst the aspersions cast upon his character were hardly to be distinguished from those alleged against the correspondents. A further complication lay in the fact that the court was primarily investigating, not the wife’s guilt or innocence, but whether she was fit to plead. The defense urged that she was barred by her insanity; the petitioner claimed that she had been in her senses when she made the

confessions and now only simulated madness to shield herself from the consequences of her crime. Though Serjeant Ballantyne, in his opening speech for Sir Charles Mordaunt, went so far as to admit that the respondent's statement, "I have done very wrong," might in the case of the Prince of Wales "imply great impropriety without actual criminality," such an interpretation would hardly be accepted by the public at large. And the Serjeant, who as counsel for the plaintiff did not mean to let the Prince off lightly, continued: "I will show that these words were true as regarded her conduct with that gentleman. Her husband had objected to her keeping up an acquaintance with him and he had no knowledge that she continued that acquaintance. I shall produce a number of letters from the gentleman himself, not indicating actual crime, but showing that improper correspondence took place."

All this, and particularly the letters, sounded sinister. The atmosphere became blacker when the inevitable lady's maid and butler stated in the box how the Prince had called on Lady Mordaunt when staying at the Alexandra Hotel, then a new and fashionable rendezvous, how he came at four and did not go till half-past five or six, how on such occasions he did not use his private carriage, and how Lady Mordaunt had given instructions that no one else was to be admitted whilst he was there. Excitement grew on the fourth day when Serjeant Ballantyne said he was not in a position to contradict the evidence already given as to Lady Mordaunt's present state of mind. If both parties admitted she was now mad, the probability of her having been so since her confinement was obviously increased. This portent of victory for the defense caused a hum in court which was interrupted by the Judge, Lord Penzance, saying he had just been informed that the gallery could not safely hold more than a certain complement. Serjeant Ballantyne's suggestion that it should be cleared did not,

however, commend itself to Lord Penzance, nor to the occupants of the gallery, none of whom were sufficiently apprehensive to leave their places.

But so far as the Prince was concerned, the turning point came when a provincial paper surreptitiously published the letters which Serjeant Ballantyne had stigmatized as improper. Anything less compromising has surely never been put in by a petitioner in the Divorce Court. They were, as the *Times* said, "the first gleam to lighten the darkness. . . . They were simple, gossiping, everyday, and if we may be permitted to use the phrase, stupidly honest letters. 'The Princess has a little girl and both are doing well.' 'I hope when I come back from Paris to make the acquaintance of your husband.' There was talk of shooting and of hunting . . . and gossip over measles. They lifted the cloud that oppressed us."

The Prince, after consulting the Lord Chancellor and Lord Granville, went into the witness box and in a brief examination by Dr. Deane, counsel for Lady Mordaunt, denied the charges insinuated, rather than directly brought, against him. The vital question, whether there had been any improper familiarity or criminal act between himself and Lady Mordaunt, he answered "in a very firm tone." When he received the affectionate congratulations of the Queen in a letter which invited him and the Princess to call at Buckingham Palace and be offered them in person, the case so far as it touched the Prince might be considered at an end. But opinion, in spite of the vindictiveness shown by Sir Charles Mordaunt, was not so easily pacified, and the Prince's popularity suffered an almost total eclipse. The larynx of the people closed under the moral shock, and his public appearances were made amidst silence. In the two places where he might have expected sympathy, at the theatre and on the race course, he was actually hissed. And when the Princess accompanied him to the Crystal

Palace after the trial, her presence did not prevent the crowd from showing its displeasure in the same way.

Needless to say, many came forward to point a moral. Mr. Gladstone gave him warning that personal confidence in the sovereign was necessary to secure the monarchy. The *Times* adjured him for the future to walk in his father's footsteps and to lead a life purified from the semblance even of levity. He did not, of course, listen to such ill-judged advice. He had his work to do; the nature of it he understood better than anyone else. In the meantime he could smile when cheapjacks on Ludgate Hill hawked a penny pamphlet with the alluring title of *The Infidelities of a Prince* and bearing the Prince of Wales's feathers on the cover, for the unparalleled revelations at which it hinted consisted solely of extracts from Parliamentary papers dealing with George IV. Here was salt that had lost its savor. And the moral reprobation of his own Sunday journal did not need to be taken too seriously. *Reynolds's Newspaper*, in regretting that he had not been put to a severe cross-examination, said it was not surprising that scandal should arise from visits paid by a young married man unaccompanied by his wife to a young married woman whose husband was invariably absent when such calls were made. But then, *Reynolds's* was a pioneer in exploiting the Sunday taste for the salacious spices of the divorce and police courts, which it found not incompatible with an austere Republicanism.

## VII

### TROUBLES OF THE NOVITIATE

MUCH hard apprenticeship was to be undergone during the two years 1870-1871 — the most ungrateful, if not the most critical, of his life. He could do nothing right. He was abused on Tory hearthrugs for being half a Radical; the Radicals frowned on his love of pleasure, for which there was little room in industrial Mid-Victorian England, busy accumulating the capital on which its grandchildren are living. Republicanism was in the air. The economists pointed at the expense of the monarchy; they blamed the Queen for spending less than the £1000 a day allotted her by the Civil List, the Prince for spending more than his £100,000 a year. Even Ruskin — no Republican, but a transcendental Tory “with a most sincere love of kings and a dislike of everybody who attempted to disobey them” — sadly compared his own obsolete ideas of kingship, gained from Homer and Scott, with those then in vogue. These two authorities taught him that kings did more, but in proportion to their doings got less, than other people; of late it seemed that “the idea of a king has become exactly the reverse of this.” When the Republican movement, therefore, began to attain a momentum which threatened to substitute a Presidential silk hat for the crown, John Ruskin, looking out from his villa on Denmark Hill, declared that, “even with respect to convenience, it is not yet determinable by the evidence of history what is absolutely the best form of government to live under.”

It was not the fault of the Prince if he could not be an Agamemnon, or a Richard Cœur-de-Lion, whom he resem-



bled in his love of good company, as also in a certain innate dignity which his boon companions sometimes had cause to remember. "Pull yourself together, Wales," cried one such when the Prince missed an easy shot at billiards — a remark that received no direct answer, but caused the too-familiar friend to be told that his carriage was at the door. The lampoons showed "Guelpho the Gay" as an idle spendthrift, "now shallow, larky, genial-hearted," now one to whom "life was a desert tempered by new trousers." Since whatever he did made tongues wag and set tempers on edge, he had every inducement not to move beyond the bounds of pleasure. A visit he paid to Ireland, which he hoped would soothe that distracted country, excited the Fenians to a Sunday-afternoon riot outside the windows of the Viceregal Lodge, where he was staying, an experience that sensibly cooled his ardor to help the Irish. He presided over the opening of the Trade-Unionist Exhibition and said that he hoped it would help to strengthen sympathy and friendly relations between employers and their workmen; and the hard-headed industrialists of the time, who wanted labor to be cheap and submissive and cared nothing for sympathy between master and men, grumbled at such a dangerous statement.

Public opinion, stirred by the Franco-German War, labeled him as pro-German; he was in continual hot water with the Queen and her ministers for being pro-French; altogether, it was a difficult time. Yet out of its travail emerge the two themes that distinguish the Edwardian era, the identification of the monarchy with an awakened social conscience, and the entente with France. Many things helped to propagate the bacilli of pity for the under dog, a symptom being the extension of the franchise by Disraeli in 1867 which gave the vote to the same under dog in the towns and turned to political channels the energies of Trade-Unionism, then controlled by the famous Junta

of which George Odger, "the communistic cobbler," was the head. And the new orientation in foreign policy, which took over a generation to effect, began to be possible when victorious Prussia imposed a humiliating peace on the Third Republic. Then for the first time Englishmen felt sorry for their neighbor across the channel, and Britannia, no longer afraid of the poor disheveled lady with whom she had so often quarreled, shivered at the brutality of Bismarck, who followed the English way of making hard terms for the conquered.

There was never any doubt where the Prince's sympathies lay in the Franco-German War. The Queen at first was strongly pro-German, remembering how the Prince Consort had foreseen the necessity that the vainglorious and immoral people of France should be put down. The Prince, on the other hand, felt no less warmly for the French. He did this by instinct, rather than by any weighing of moral pros and cons. When Gladstone told him that Napoleon and Bismarck "were much on a par," that statesman thought he had said all; since both were morally tainted, a wise man would give his sympathy to neither. But the Prince was no prig. He admired and loved France as he already mistrusted Bismarck, who had taught him his first lesson in political realism by interfering to prevent the *rapprochement* which the Prince hoped would result from his visit to Petersburg in 1867.

The Prince could now aliment his dislike of the German Chancellor by giving rein to his feelings of friendship for the Emperor Napoleon and the Empress Eugénie, of admiration for the culture which had produced Paris. It may have been sentiment; but behind it lay an instinctive grasp of the forces that were to mould Europe. As he watched the two armies, he burned to play a rôle in the scenes of momentous interest — the expression is his own — which were being enacted in France; yet, far from satisfying his ambition,



THE PRINCE OF WALES AT THIRTY  
1871



he only fell into scrapes. England was neutral — so long as Belgium remained unviolated, she stood outside the war. Neutrality, however, did not prevent the Prince, who never set much store by the value of silence, from saying what he thought. When he expressed himself warmly at the French Ambassador's dinner table, the Prussian Ambassador, Count von Bernstorff, bearer of an ill-omened name in German diplomacy, took care that his opinions should lose nothing of their partiality in transmission to Berlin. There the report that the Prince hoped the Prussians would be beaten raised a storm. His sister, the Crown Princess, passed it on to the Queen; Bismarck spread it about that the Prince was an enemy of Prussia. A family squabble with international reverberations only died down when the Prince denied the story, and the Queen, always ready to stand up for her children against outsiders, turned against Bernstorff, whom she described to her eldest daughter as a "shocking mischief-maker."

The Queen's lack of confidence in her son's discretion communicated itself to Mr. Gladstone when the Prince started off to Denmark to bring back his wife, who at the outbreak of war was holiday-making in her native country. But he proved a model of prudence and strongly backed the official policy of neutrality, though Danish public opinion, helped by French propaganda to gain any ally, would have been ready to try to revenge the memories of 1864. Home in England again early in August, he reported the situation in Denmark to the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary — little enough vent for feelings which made him long for action. "If only something could be done to stop this terrible war," he wrote to his mother on August 21, when hostilities had been in progress for a little over five weeks; "I cannot bear sitting here and doing nothing whilst all this blood letting is going on," and he suggested that he should take letters to the Emperor and

the King of Prussia "with friendly advice." When the Queen and her Ministers turned the proposal down, as they were bound to do, he said he quite understood. "I only hope, dear Mama, you will not forget my offer if I can be of any use." Such feelings did credit to his heart, though they showed that he did not yet regard foreign politics with the detachment of the adept.

But no harm was done so long as he only made suggestions to the Queen. When, early in October, he wrote to the Empress Eugénie and impulsively placed Chiswick House at her disposal, this loyalty to an exiled friend drew serious trouble upon him. Ministers protested. The Queen was angry at such interference, not less because he was playing into the hands of Bismarck, at the moment engaged in a characteristic intrigue with one of Marshal Bazaine's staff, General Bourbaki, which, by using the ex-Empress as a cat's-paw in a plot to restore the Empire, was intended to antagonize Republican feeling in France against England.

There is no room for disinterested friendship in high politics, little for pity. In the case of his friend, General Gallifet, who had been taken prisoner, the Prince could try to secure his exchange, but Bernstorff refused to forward a letter from the Prince to the King of Prussia on the Frenchman's behalf, and his efforts, if they did no harm, neither did any good. The Marquis de Gallifet's high spirits were not affected by his comparatively mild incarceration, some of which he spent at Ems taking the waters, praying also to Saint Bombard and Saint Krupp to spare his wife, who was in the siege of Paris, and he was able to provide the Prince with some vivid pictures of the war. It is worth noting how this lifelong friend of the Prince's wrote to him, when peace terms were being discussed, that if Alsace and Lorraine had to be renounced France would in due time seek to reverse the annexation.

In another intervention of mercy, the Prince was more

successful, Bismarck, though he did not cease his fire of propaganda against him, causing Moltke to reconsider his refusal to allow Madame Rosencrantz, the wife of a secretary at the Danish Legation in Paris, who was known to the Prince and Princess, to pass the lines and visit her dying husband. In such small offices of friendship, deserving of record as showing the goodness of heart that gave the sweetness to his character, he strove to mitigate the rigors of war. When he wished to show a broader humanity in supporting the relief movement to send flour to the famine-stricken provinces of France, he touched on state matters and received a peremptory request from the Foreign Secretary to do nothing of the kind.

All this was galling. But a public attack in the Press and the House of Commons for his alleged partiality for the Germans gave him reasonable cause for anger. The indictment, framed by the Radicals, was based on congratulations which he was alleged to have sent to the Crown Prince through Captain Hozier, a Queen's messenger. Misrepresentation could hardly have been more gross. The fact was that Captain Hozier called on him without notice, said he was going to Versailles, and asked whether he could be the bearer of any letters for the Crown Prince or others. The Prince gave him formal messages of greeting for his brother-in-law and one or two others of his royal German relatives. In conversation he pointed out that the German Headquarter Staff thought him entirely French in his sympathies, but he wished the Crown Prince to know that he had fulfilled the obligations of a neutral, though he felt deeply for France and hoped that Germany would not impose crippling terms. When Captain Hozier remarked that Germany would make war on England within three years, the Prince naturally questioned such a rash forecast and added that he hoped "the bad feeling which the Germans entertained towards England would soon cease."

Any stick was good enough for honest Radicals to use against the royalty that corrupted public life at its head; but it belabored the voluminous folds of Mr. Gladstone's rhetoric in vain. In defending the Prince, he spoke of the unfairness of attacking exalted personages on reports published in the papers, and drew a picture of the gossips who sat round country firesides with nothing else to do except embroider anecdotes woven on the stuff of falsehood. For the moment silence fell on the assailants of the monarchic system, whose feelings had been outraged by the Prince's shocking gesture towards downtrodden France. Well may the Prince have reflected on the truth of the sage's saying that there is nothing so difficult and dangerous as the commerce of men. For whilst the busybodies, the agitators, and the gentle idealists repeated such stories of his Germanophilism, his sister Vicky, the mentor of his babyhood and the cleverest of her sex, attributed his pro-French leanings to a jealousy of the reputation won by her husband on the fields of war. The only thing to do under such a cross fire was to sit quiet and prevent any symptoms of persecution mania from lodging in his mind, to follow duty and pleasure as if no enemies were waiting to pounce upon him.

It was easier since no man nourished less rancor, and none enjoyed more the hazards of his vocation; the whole gamut of the national life was to be his battlefield; already he was beginning to know it, and surely to count which of his adversaries it was worth while converting. Smart Joseph Chamberlain, turning Birmingham into a model municipality, a man of inordinate ambition, the darling of the Radicals (who could tell? — possibly another Cromwell), was to be one; Dilke another. The easier, too, since he understood by instinct the real nature of kingship, which his adversaries misunderstood by the light of their reason — of kingship which identifies itself with no class, but from its Olympian heights sees all men equally as its subjects.



The establishment of the Republic in France, as in 1848, excited sympathetic repercussion in England, only this time the tremors were stronger, the fears that the existing political fabric might collapse, more widespread. Many forces seemed to be working towards the same subversive end — political Nonconformity. Trade-Unionists, the Liberals of the left, formed an imposing coalition which excited the apprehensions of the Prime Minister and worried the Queen, in whose seclusion the attack found good Republican propaganda. There were Sir Charles Dilke and Sir Henry Hoare in the House of Commons: Dilke, a statistical encyclopædia, but without the power to inflame his fellow men; Hoare, a wealthy Eastern Counties Quaker. Outside it stood Bradlaugh, the born agitator, a professed atheist who yet attacked the Prince for his divagations from Christian morality, which Bradlaugh was far from observing himself; George Odger, disciple of Karl Marx in his Bloomsbury period, a passionate fellow whose quarrels with his comrades at "The Hole in the Wall" were turned to ridicule by his enemies; and amongst the poets, little red-haired Swinburne, setting his trumpet to his lips with the call to

Build up our one Republic state by state,  
England with France, and France with Spain.

If the Third Republic proved to be more than a stop-gap for a Royalist restoration, so sober a judge and so false a prophet as Lord Selborne, the Lord Chancellor, believed that the monarchy in England was doomed, and, what is more, expressed himself thus to the Queen.

The Republicans, meanwhile, attacked both her and the Heir Apparent. Her health was said to be seriously affected, and a remark by Disraeli as to the Queen's physical and moral fitness to govern was seized upon by Bradlaugh, who asked why, in the event of her abdication, a sovereign should be chosen from a member of a family that had never had

any English sympathies. Odger, a bolder man, prophesied in the late summer of 1871 that the Queen's death, which he said might occur at any moment, would be concurrent with that of royalty in England. And many who had no Republican sentiments wondered, when they read of the Prince's visits to the tables at Homburg, — morally a delicious place, said an American cynic, where the females one sees are enough to make one's hair stand out in all directions, — whether he was not figuratively playing his cards in a manner likely to bring about the realization of such forecasts.

But the Republicans had their own troubles. The proceedings of the Paris Commune frightened the sentimental Liberals among them. To the Red Republicans their bourgeois comrades, including Bradlaugh, were suspect, and it was noticed at the Republican demonstration in Hyde Park, in April 1871, that these pink brethren came in for most of the honest abuse. They differed so widely that some stalwarts generously wished the Queen to live for another ten years, as it would "take at least that time to educate the people to Republicanism." Kindliness, rather than logic, must have inspired such a thought, since they should have welcomed the accession of a Prince who, according to them, was quite unfit to reign.

The Republican movement appears in retrospect rather a spineless affair, for its political protagonists, instead of echoing Swinburne's abuse of "the prince that clogs and the priest that clings," preferred to dwell on the expense of the monarchy, caused by the Queen's large family which had to be provided for out of the public funds. The abstract hatred of kings, which is the milk of republicanism, was strangely lacking. "If only the Guelphs could find it in their hearts to be generous and charitable in the true sense of the word, they might remain many years on the throne." So wrote *Reynolds's Newspaper* in one of its franker moods. But it looked dangerous enough to contemporary eyes, and

an event which none of the prophets had foreseen made it look still blacker.

Instead of the Queen, it was the Prince who suddenly passed into the shadow of death. On his way home from Scotland in the autumn of 1871, he stayed at one of the stately homes of England, "the no less stately homes of the microbes and filthy bacilli of disease." There he caught typhoid, the scourge of the Victorian era. On his return to Sandringham he sickened, and for a month lay gradually weakening under the strain of the incessant fever. His recovery began to be despaired of. Both his host and his groom, who had contracted the same infection, died. At first his Republican critics, remembering the peccadillos, pointed out that his demise would realize in an unexpected manner Mr. Odger's prophecy that he would never sit upon the throne. These hopes, or fears, were echoed abroad. The New York papers agreed in thinking that all things in England were tending to a political catastrophe; some American journalists flattered their readers that the fall of the British monarchy would be "the death blow to all that remained of ancient feudalism."

The month's suspense, daily increasing the public sympathy, grew deeper as the Prince gradually sank. At the end of November the Queen had paid him a visit. His condition became so critical on December 8 that she again hurriedly returned to Sandringham from Windsor. His life hung by a thread. Sir William Jenner, the royal physician and the greatest authority on typhoid fever in the mid-Victorian world, declared he might die at any moment. A "bad spasm" on December 11 left the patient in a state of extreme weakness. Two days later he still hung over the abyss. Early that day a frightful fit of coughing seemed, in his mother's words, to threaten his life. She and the Princess Alice both agreed there could be no hope. "I went up to his bed," the Queen records in her diary, "and

took hold of his poor hand, kissing it and stroking his arm. He turned and looked wildly at me, saying: 'Who are you?' and then: 'It's Mamma.' 'Dear child,' I replied. Later he said, 'It is so kind of you to come.' Even in the prostration of the fever his thoughtfulness remained.

With dread the Queen remembered that on December 14, ten years before, she had lost her husband. Was his anniversary to be marked by another bereavement? But when nothing remained to hope for, on the night of the thirteenth, the patient suddenly sank into a natural sleep. Next morning he awoke free from delirium. He was able to take nourishment. When his mother entered the room he recognized her, asking the nurse whether it was not the Queen. The question caused his mother to go over to him, and she has left us a pretty picture of his kissing her hand and smiling in his usual way as he said: "So kind of you to come. It is the kindest thing you could do." A week later all danger was past. The coincidence was too remarkable to be the result of chance; it betokened, many thought who had no pretense to piety, that the Higher Power had heard the prayers offered up from every church in the land on the previous Sunday. Already the loyal feelings aroused by the Prince's illness had suggested that it was not unconnected with designs more than human to check the spread of Republicanism. "Might it not be," asked the Dean of Carlisle, "that God in the Wisdom of His Providence at just this moment has permitted this great affliction simply to call out the loyalty of the land?" The same idea was expressed by the Duke of Cambridge: "The Republicans say their chances are up — thank God for this. He has sent this dispensation to save us."

When the Prince — "pale as yet and feverworn," Tennyson wrote of him, though it was generally remarked how well he looked — drove with the reluctant Queen and the Princess to the thanksgiving service in St. Paul's Cathedral,

he was greeted with an enthusiasm which obliterated the memories of the still-recent past. Not a house was undecorated. In the Cathedral the absence of uniforms and bright dresses seemed perhaps to reflect the past rather than symbolize a more hopeful future. But the fervor of the congregation atoned for its dowdiness, and the last hymn, in which the Queen joined with might and main, sent a thrill of emotion through the great church. A new chapter had been begun: "Dilke's chances were dished"; everyone except the Radicals rejoiced. These muttered in their beards. The blind Professor Fawcett, most incorruptible of political economists, doubted whether the Prince's recovery would help the monarchy; John Richard Green, who, as the historian of the English people, should have understood how deep the roots of kingship lay in the national consciousness, remembered that Louis XVI's recovery had not prevented 1789. Shrewder was the remark of another Cambridge don whose wits had been sharpened, not by economics, but by Greek. "He has now the chance," wrote Sir Richard Jebb, who, besides being the best Grecian of his year, had mixed in the sporting set with the Prince when they were undergraduates together, "if he knows how to use it, of becoming the most popular man in England."

If the future King Edward had desired nothing more than popularity, his path would have been easy.

## VIII

### FIRST DIPLOMATIC ACHIEVEMENTS

THE Prince, with the vigor of a man whose tissues have been strengthened by the discipline of fever, again returned to the life, potent in example but restricted in action, imposed upon him as his mother's heir. He might well feel impatient as, during the flower of his age, he was condemned to sit in the anteroom to the throne, watching the figures hurrying by to gain the presence: Disraeli, old, sardonic, pouring flattery into the Queen's ear which helped to poison her mind against his rival; Gladstone, becoming more of the demagogue with age, but always the most loyal of servants, except in his foreign policy the ideal minister for a liberal-minded prince.

There was much in Dizzy that the Prince found congenial. This philo-Semite liked him for his wit, woefully over-decorated as it seems to us, for his freedom from moral parade, and above all for his imperialism. Disraeli's influence over the Queen, dangerously subversive of the impartiality which the Sovereign should show towards party leaders, caused the Prince anxiety; but he was strong-minded enough not to feel personal rancor because Disraeli kept him from any share in state secrets. Once only were their relations strained. When the most adroit of courtiers, always wishing to please the Queen, failed to acquaint the Prince with the project of proclaiming his mother Empress of India, there seemed a possibility that a Marlborough House Party might come into existence. The heir to the throne clearly should have been consulted on a matter which would affect himself, and he told Disraeli so. Dizzy, mis-

taking his man, thought to wheedle him with the same flattery that was sweet to the Queen, and suggested that the Prince might also receive some additional title. But to court ridicule by adopting the style of an Imperial Highness was far from the Prince's mind, and he said bluntly that he would accept nothing of the sort. The false step might have cost Dizzy dear, as the Prince knew, for he pointed out through his secretary that, if it became known that such a suggestion had been made and refused, it would increase his popularity and correspondingly depress that of the Queen and her Government. Luckily for the Prime Minister, the Prince did not press his advantage; the Queen took the blame on herself, and her heir, who had been in India when all this happened, calmed her fears of a breach between her son and her favorite.

The self-restraint he showed in affairs of state all these years, so much in contrast to the social freedom that he inculcated by his example, masked high ambition. He wished to help reshape Europe, to see England transform itself in the acceptance of what a later statesman has called the inevitability of gradualness — a new England, a new Europe, developing out of the past; a growth, not a mechanically imposed change. He looked beyond Europe, to America, to the contribution in wealth and in vitality which the United States could offer to the common fund of civilization, to the Colonies — as he put it, “the legitimate and natural homes in the future of the most adventurous and energetic spirits of the motherland.” And in particular he looked across the Channel.

In the complex of Europe that presented itself to the Prince in the middle seventies, France stood out — France “the mother of arts,” the home of culture, France the eye of which was Paris. It was outrageous that England should not be on the friendliest terms with her great neighbor; history, which recorded their endless quarrels, ought for the

future to be written in another strain, and the two countries should walk hand in hand at the head of European civilization. This was clear to the Prince, but not at all clear to his mother, who strongly deprecated an alliance with France, especially with Republican France. Both, however, agreed that Bismarck was dangerous. With the old homely Germany which the Prince Consort had stood for, one could sympathize. His brother-in-law Fritz belonged to the same school, and the Prince thought it was possible that when he came to the throne he would undo the evil which Bismarck had caused, and give back to France her lost provinces, which otherwise would be, soon or late, a certain cause of war. The Prince cherished this strange notion long after he should have shed the last drops of sentiment from his political philosophy, and its expression caused his imperial nephew, Wilhelm II, to strike one of his earliest attitudes.

At any rate, Bismarck was "a terrible man" — the words were the Queen's, for their judgments coincided as regards the Prussian swashbuckler. She expressed herself with her usual freedom to her daughter and son-in-law, after Bismarck threatened in 1875 to fall upon France a second time. "*No one*," she wrote, "will tolerate any Power wishing to dictate to all Europe." Two years before this, at the Vienna Exhibition, it had been brought home to the Prince that Prussia was aiming at a European hegemony. Much to his annoyance, the Emperor Francis Joseph ruled that the German Crown Prince had precedence of him. It was a slight on the Prince of Wales. Why should he, who had been the heir apparent for the longer period, the bearer of a princely title going back to the thirteenth century, be thus placed behind his junior in royal rank and the heir to a parvenu kingdom? The Emperor's reply that, at his Court, Crown Princes were placed in alphabetical order was too transparent to disguise Bismarck's hand. His rudeness became brutality in the case of France. But though the Prince advised his French



friends to be long-suffering under German threats, it was otherwise when these turned against Belgium. Then he boldly told the Russian Ambassador that England would be ready to take up arms to defend the rights of the country whose neutrality she guaranteed; he knew well enough that what he said would get round to Berlin; and Russia also must be made aware that England had not sunk since the Crimean War into a degenerate pacifism.

Thus the Prince looked upon Europe with eyes round which middle age was beginning to set its marks. But his royal eminence, though it brought him into social contact with the protagonists in the European drama then unfolding itself, allowed him no other privilege. His knowledge of foreign politics could be learned only from the more or less casual conversations he might have with statesmen or diplomatists. The Queen told him little, and for years his main source of information on foreign politics was the *Figaro*. With this equipment and his native wit he brought about his first diplomatic achievement, of which Paris was the scene and the great Gambetta the other protagonist.

The Prince had his sympathies — and these at first were not with the Third Republic. Like many others, he thought it was only a temporary régime; the traditional home of the monarchy must surely welcome soon, rather than late, its legitimate sovereign. A nicer point lay in the question who was the rightful heir, the Comte de Paris, head of the Bourbons, or the Prince Imperial, whom the Bonapartists already called Napoleon IV. In the assurance that it must be one or the other, he was equally friendly with both. But men and things came to persuade the Prince otherwise.

Republican France had not deposed Paris from its sovereignty amongst cities, and the Prince did not allow his visits to be prevented by its Republican dress. Radicals like Labouchere girded at the rottenness of the Empire which the new régime had come to cure. Paris, however, had

never been adored for its virtues, and it did not mean to allow any Republican austerity to come between it and its lovers, amongst whom the Prince of Wales stood out a true Parisian in his tastes, at home everywhere, a habitué of its theatres and restaurants, a man whose approval could make the reputation of a chef or a dancer. No better compound of the *grand seigneur* and the *bon vivant* could be imagined. His chic was impeccable. The very name of the Hotel Bristol, where he always stayed, had the indefinable accent of style for our worldly grandparents. No renown exceeded that of his favorite restaurant, the Café des Anglais, where gourmets submitted to the sway of Ducléré, in Rossini's phrase the Mozart of cooking. The Prince showed it his favor by keeping special pieces of plate for the Lucullan dinners which he gave in *le Grand Seize*, most famous of *cabinets particuliers*. It was in Number 16 that Cora Pearl was once served up as an *entremets*, a Venus lying on a vast silver platter — Cora Pearl, who, though she reigned in Paris, remained a patriotic Englishwoman, to the annoyance of her neighbors in the Rue de Chaillot when, during the siege, she flew the Union Jack from her balcony. ¶

There were not wanting critics amongst the Prince's future subjects to cavil at his bonhomie, so different from the stiffness behind which the normal Englishman was wont to hide his feeling of inferiority in the presence of Latin civilization. They could only gossip about the Prince's more recondite pleasures. But when he visited a newspaper office and allowed journalists and artists to toast him in champagne, he could be openly blamed for carrying a royal foible too far. He turned from Bohemia to consort with his royalist friends in their châteaux on the Loire, only to be criticized for showing partiality to the Legitimists. Amid the polished royalist society which found a centre at Chantilly, the spacious home of the Duc d'Aumale, where men and women moved with the ease and grace that spoke of three

centuries of high culture, the Republic seemed a weak, unfledged thing. France would be untrue to herself, untrue to Europe and the world for which she had stood as the example of good manners, if the dingy etiquette of the Republican protocol were to be anything more than a temporary expedient, ready to give way to a monarchy directly French nerves recovered from the crash of 1870. Such were the congenial hopes shared by the Prince with Orleanists and Imperialists alike.

But another side of the picture appealed to his liberalism. The Republic was making a gallant effort to repair the disasters it had inherited, and some of his friends were helping in the work, amongst them the Marquis de Galliffet, whose accomplishments in the arts of peace and war were matched by the beauty and social gifts of his marquise. In that entourage the Prince learned of the genius of Gambetta. Hitherto he had regarded the sturdy lawyer of Italian descent as an adventurer, an agitator, the French counterpart of a Bradlaugh, shouting his fiery slogans: "Une seule science, l'économie politique: un seul autel, l'humanité: un seul principe, l'ordre: une seule société, le monde." How could a future king, who believed that in foreign politics one should be excessively reserved in words, excessively firm in deeds, feel sympathy for such rhetoric?

Now he learned that Gambetta was very different from what he had imagined, that he was essentially a moderate, a convinced Republican, indeed, but a man to be trusted, of very different kidney to Clemenceau, who was unquestionably a dangerous fellow. The Prince listened to the stories which these friends of his told him about Gambetta, he listened to Gambetta's overwhelming eloquence in the Chamber, he realized that here was the leading political personality in France, and he made up his mind that the Republic had come to stay. When, therefore, the new régime felt strong enough to make its first gesture of good

health and hold an International Exhibition in Paris, the Prince, to the chagrin of his royalist friends, gave it his enthusiastic support.

He loved Exhibitions. He had been brought up on them. They might be said to be his father's invention. Some of his earliest public activities were connected with that of 1862, a posthumous achievement of the Prince Consort's. He had been directly concerned with the International Exhibition at Vienna in 1873, where as Prince of Wales he had to walk behind the upstart Crown Prince of Prussia. But something more than the pleasurable anticipation of exercising this hereditary technique caused him to welcome the invitation of the French Government to become President of the British Section of the Paris Exhibition of 1878. Beyond the commercial advantages which Exhibitions are fondly thought to bring in their train lay something more important — the goodwill of Republican France. More than that: Republican sentiment, bourgeois and shy, would appreciate the lead he gave to his cousins of the royal caste; there would be no Germans to dispute his precedence, and Paris would offer a stage where he could play a rôle to impress all Europe.

The prospect fascinated him, and he worked energetically amidst the opposition of good people and of bad to reach his desired ends. Unimaginative Tory ministers stood in his way at home, objecting to his undertaking official duties which belonged to a member of the Cabinet; a respectable grandee, the Duke of Richmond, claimed as President of the Council that he, and not the Prince, should be official head of the British Section. French aristocrats rejoiced when the Prince found that the machinery of the French government departments threatened to interfere with his plans. One of his projects was to lend the Collection which he had brought back with him from India. The Executive Committee, in refusing to insure it, presented him with an awk-

ward dilemma. It did not, however, trouble him for long. If France were close-handed, he would not be so. He dropped the question of insurance. In vain the royalists warned him not to risk the choice examples of Indian craftsmanship, the swords and the shields inlaid with precious metals, the ivories, the objects of art, given to him with lavish hand by the Rajahs; the warning was repeated by the Duc de Broglie, whose words should have had the more weight since he had served the same Republic as Prime Minister. The Prince, however, abruptly silenced him. "These Paris Republicans," he said, "may have hot heads, but they have generous hearts and a higher sense of honor than you credit them with, Monsieur le Duc." Before such a Prince, Paris on its side might well capitulate.

Thus everything drew to a happy conclusion. The British Section of the Exhibition in the Champs Élysées was a model of arrangement, and its President a paragon of tact and affability. At the opening ceremony he walked in the procession with the Marshal MacMahon and other dignitaries of the Republic, a notable figure amidst a handful of princelings. Unquestionably he was the most distinguished visitor, so sure of himself that he could laughingly acknowledge the cries of "Vive la Republique" with which some of the deputies in the Parisian spirit of badinage acclaimed the passage of the royalties. It seemed that the Entente Cordiale was no longer an aspiration; at the official banquet he declared his belief that nothing was now likely to change it, based as it was on mutual interests. Unfortunately the lady to whom the Prince had given his arm was an idealist with her own views about the butter she wished for her bread, and within a few weeks she was abusing him with the acrimony which idealism so easily engenders.

The quarrel might have been foreseen. If there is one subject on which France shows sensitiveness, it is about her status in the Levant. France, always thinking to propagate

her ideas amongst mankind, is ever mindful of her mission in the Eastern Mediterranean, once the cradle of Europe. Had she not, ever since the time of Saint Louis, been admitted by other Christian nations to have a preponderant interest in those historic regions? And was France now to be ousted by England, casting covetous eyes on the dominions of the Sultan as she strained to hold her beloved India? Disraeli's policy was inspired by fear of Russia, a fear the Prince at that time shared and under the shadow of which he had for the moment become politically a *persona grata* to his mother and her Prime Minister. France's anxiety for her position in the Levant, now threatened by England, was strengthened in its anti-British bias by the movement then taking shape for an understanding with England's enemy, Russia, that would be a guarantee against further German aggression. When the news of the Anglo-Turkish Convention became known, Paris was in a fury. So seriously did Lord Lyons, the British Ambassador, regard the ill feeling aroused by the Sultan's secret cession of Cyprus to England that he advised the Prince not to return to Paris, as he had intended to do, early in July.

The Prince decided otherwise. The Parisians might be enraged at believing the Prince's winning manners had been employed to hoodwink them at the moment when his mother's Prime Minister was annexing part of the Sultan's dominions; all the more reason for him to try and allay the storm. Here was a field for ambition, an opportunity to do something worth while. The most powerful force in French politics was Gambetta. From Gambetta's own lips the Prince had learned two months before, on the only occasion they had met, that the French statesman sympathized with his wish for an alliance between their two countries, that he shared his dislike of reactionary Russia and did not agree with his compatriots in their suspicion of Disraeli's Eastern policy. Since then Gambetta might have

been influenced by the popular animosity at the British Convention with Turkey, which Disraeli fondly believed gave England the mastery of Western Asia. But the Prince thought that Gambetta could still be persuaded not to precipitate a crisis if he were approached in the right way. Not only, therefore, did he go to Paris, but on his arrival he invited Gambetta to luncheon, and that nothing should be wanting in the honor shown to the stalwart Republican deputy, the Prince's own carriage waited upon him and brought him to the Hotel Bristol, a gesture apparently not incompatible with a secrecy which caused the meeting to be kept from the knowledge of the Paris police.

History speaks of the earlier stages of this historic *déjeuner* in two voices. According to the café gossips, Gambetta declared afterwards that he had never passed a more agreeable afternoon or felt himself in better trim for conversation; the Prince was altogether charming and free from pose; particularly impressive was the way he did not try to remind others of his rank whilst never for a moment letting them forget it; such a delicate feeling for the *convenances* had a fine, nay a republican, humanity. So ran such scraps of anecdotage as afterwards found their way into the *Courrier de Paris*, the only paper then cried on the Boulevards. And on the Prince's side there was no hint that everything had not gone well from the start, or that the issue of the meeting had ever been in doubt.

But there are other accounts of this much discussed luncheon party which show that Gambetta and the Prince did not understand one another quite so quickly. These record how Gambetta at first was ill at ease, morally estranged by the perfidiousness of Albion, socially aware to the point of gaucheness that he, the spokesman of *les nouvelles couches sociales*, was seated beside the heir to the senior monarchy in Europe — as the kingless Parisians liked to describe the Prince when they felt in good humor. The

Prince, also, though he stood above class-consciousness and accepted Gambetta's Republicanism, found it hard to be so accommodating in the matter of his guest's clothes. His sensitiveness to dress was shocked at Gambetta's costume, which erred against every canon of good taste, from the boots with their pointed patent-leather caps to the atrociously fitting frock coat. Could such a vulgar exterior, which the square beard, squat figure, and wall-eye emphasized, hide a man of parts? The dubious Prince communicated his doubts to Gambetta and reduced the talker, whose inspiration on the tribune or round the café table never failed, to something like silence. M. Gambetta sat frozen by the etiquette which the tall footman behind the Prince's chair, a gorgeous figure in scarlet and gold amidst the black-coated waiters, symbolized.

So the meal proceeded amidst a stilted general conversation. But when coffee and cigars, those faithful servants of diplomacy, made their appearance, the tension relaxed. The prince forgot that Gambetta's bootlace tie was awful to behold, Gambetta that he was a small bourgeois to whom table manners were not second nature. They began to talk. Gambetta discovered that the Prince was one of the best-informed men he had ever met with, the Prince that Gambetta's brilliance as a conversationalist, his power of lucid and witty generalization, had not been exaggerated. Politics came under review. Gambetta spoke of a subject dear to them both, an Anglo-French alliance; the Prince assured him that the cession of Cyprus in no way affected French interests; Gambetta admitted that he was more or less reconciled to the annexation. The other members of the party had dropped back and allowed the two protagonists to exchange confidences which even the waiters failed to overhear. All the afternoon they discussed the questions which to both were of more importance than all the world besides. And at six o'clock the pair were still talking.



It was the Prince's first diplomatic achievement. The crisis which Bismarck would have welcomed — "This is progress," the old fox said to Dizzy apropos of beautiful but useless Cyprus becoming a part of Queen Victoria's dominions, "and there is nothing more popular than progress" — was averted, and the Prince's intervention in the domestic politics of France reached its successful issue when he assured M. Waddington, the Foreign Minister, that Gambetta would not attack the Government on its attitude at the Berlin Congress. The credit of having smoothed a dangerous situation was duly accorded him. Lord Lyons's opinion that he had acquitted himself with great skill was worth a good deal, coming as it did from the most famous diplomat of the time. And on his return to London the Prince received a letter from Lord Salisbury, no facile courtier, in which the Foreign Secretary thanked him for having prevented French opinion from taking a direction that might have led to a "disagreeable and even hazardous estrangement between the two countries."

Shortly after this Gambetta, now the Prince's firm friend, became President of the Chamber and so strengthened the Prince's faith in the stability of the Third Republic. They met often — though the Frenchman was never able to accept the Prince's invitation to stay at Sandringham — and their friendship withstood the strain of Gambetta's conversion to the necessity of an alliance with Russia, which soon became the corner stone of French foreign policy. For over twenty years the Prince was destined to see the relations of France with Russia growing closer as French mistrust of British policy in Egypt and the Levant created a *détente* between the two countries which in his view should have stood together as the leaders of European civilization.

While Gambetta, during the brief span of life left to him, was the directing force in French politics, there could be no fear of any serious misunderstandings. Between him and

the Prince complete confidence had been established. Each realized the other's worth, and, secure in that knowledge, they exchanged their points of view with full enjoyment of the thrust and parry of conversation. Each saw politics from his own angle. The Prince would argue for the political uses of an aristocracy, pointing out that in England the peerage was continually being recruited by the most eminent men in the professions and in industry; Gambetta would reply that such a thing might be still possible in England, — for a time, — but that a republic could only have one aristocracy, "the aristocracy of Science and merit," which required no titles to emphasize its precedence. Their ideas might be different, but their sentiments were the same, and such arguments would end pleasantly with the Prince's affirmation: "You are a true republican, M. Gambetta," to be answered by Gambetta's "Permit me to avow it, Sir. I find it logical that you, for your part, should be a royalist," and then both would laugh and the talk run into other channels. Or Gambetta, paying his principles the respect of inconsistency, would spike his host's guns by saying: "Ah, Sir, if all Princes were like you, there would be no need of republics." It was no waste of time, Gambetta protested to his friend Madame Adam, to talk with the Prince, even over a merry supper at the Café des Anglais, "for he loved France at once *gaiement et sérieusement* and his dream of the future was an entente with us."

Gambetta did not need to be converted. But another democrat who played a rôle in this friendship was less faithful to his republicanism. Sir Charles Dilke, long a friend of Gambetta's, was now a friend of the Prince's. The Prince had watched him in Parliament, had noticed how he and Joseph Chamberlain stood out amongst the younger Liberals, and remarked the wide knowledge of this private member which embraced all subjects from the state of Europe to those social problems which lay at the heart of

the national well-being. To meet him at a friend's dinner table was easy to arrange, and it was easy to show him that amiability which captivated Gambetta. Dilke had a less generous nature than the French tribune, and his comments on the Prince were colored by the nature of his political creed. Yet there was much in common between the Prince, who shared Dilke's radical and French sympathies, and the erstwhile republican. When Dilke, very soon after this *rapprochement*, became Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in Gladstone's second ministry, he was able to provide the Prince with information which ministers, following the Queen's wishes, had previously withheld from him. Dilke, whose republicanism the Queen never forgot or forgave, did this unofficially, appreciating no doubt more fully the paradox of a situation which enabled an ex-republican to put the heir to the throne in possession of information which the Sovereign did not see fit to impart. For the first time in his life the Prince stood behind the scenes, and so long as Dilke held office he did not have to raise any pathetic complaints that at a time of European crisis the only papers he had received related to a strike in Belgium. Always loyal to his friends, the Prince later intervened with Gladstone to secure a cabinet post for Dilke, only to find the Queen adamant against his promotion. Then a divorce court scandal, more serious than the usual story of marital infidelity, drove him from office, and the Prince thus saw disappear another supporter of the foreign policy on which his heart was set. The bond between them, however, remained, — a bond originally strengthened by the fact that in Berlin, as the Prince had assured Dilke, they were both looked upon as French agents, — and a quarter of a century later King Edward, with his habitual loyalty, vainly used his influence to try to persuade Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman to include Dilke in his Ministry.

Gambetta, and even Dilke, could understand the serious-

ness that did not fear gayety. Others were less ready to do so, amongst them the Queen. She was unable to make a confidant of her eldest son, influenced partly by the almost inevitable jealousy which must exist between the sovereign and the heir when both are persons of strong character, and partly by her inability to realize that his pleasure-loving temperament, so different from that of his father, masked a shrewd judgment which was in touch with the new ideas fermenting beneath the respectable surface of the mid-Victorian era. She was not alone in misjudging the Prince's character. To Dilke he seemed no Liberal, but "a strong Conservative and a still stronger Jingo, really agreeing with the Queen's politics and wanting to take everything everywhere in the world and keep everything if possible." Yet to the Conservatives, and specially to their ladies, he appeared as emulating Philip Égalité, a Prince smiling upon the social revolution which the archdemagogue Gladstone was doing so much to foster. Both sides of the picture had some truth, since both were embraced in the Prince's ideal of kingship, the constitutional kingship which he sought to serve in the political crisis of 1880.

Disraeli during his last ministry had been leading the Queen along a dangerous path. He had used the arts of the courtier — semi-Oriental arts — and the blandishments of the male to establish himself in the Queen's affections. As her partiality grew for the Prime Minister who might have been serving an Asiatic potentate, so too did her dislike of his rival Gladstone. It was not difficult for Dizzy to confirm her antipathy towards a man whose taste for public ovations almost trenched on the royal prerogative, a demagogue and pacifist who carried the atmosphere of the cabinet room into the audience chamber and addressed the Queen as if she could not help seeing the logic of his liberal creed when properly expounded to her. The Prince of Wales, knowing Gladstone for what he was, a democrat exploiting

popular passions but yet filled with a profound respect for the throne, could deplore the Queen's attitude. He could do little to change it. Whilst she kept him at arm's length, she allowed her youngest son, Prince Leopold, an influence which Disraeli welcomed as consolidating his own position.

"Do you know what this is?" asked this spoiled child of a friend<sup>1</sup> one day during the height of Disraeli's ascendancy, as he took a key out of his pocket attached to a chain. "It is the Queen's cabinet key which opens all the secret dispatch boxes. Dizzy gave it to me, but my brother the Prince of Wales is not allowed to have one." It was under such galling circumstances that the Prince of Wales saw his mother, backed by his Tory brother who was twelve years his junior, embark on a course which threatened to lead the monarchy into more dangerous waters than any it had encountered during his lifetime.

In the spring of 1880, Lord Beaconsfield, using the tactical advantages possessed by the Prime Minister of choosing his own time for a dissolution, appealed suddenly to the country. The decisive defeat he suffered at the polls was due above all to the flood of oratory which Gladstone loosed in his famous Midlothian campaign, an innovation in electoral technique highly distasteful to Queen Victoria. She determined that, if Gladstone played the demagogue, she would play the Queen and use her prerogative of choosing her own Prime Minister amongst the chiefs of the victorious Liberals. When the Conservative defeat was certain, she wrote to Lord Beaconsfield that "she should not take any notice of Mr. Gladstone, who had done so much mischief. It is most essential that *that* should be known." She would send first of all for Lord Hartington, who had led the Liberals in the House of Commons during the last Parliament, and if he refused she would send for Lord Granville, the Liberal leader in the Lords.

<sup>1</sup> J. E. C. Bodley.

The Prince of Wales realized that his mother, in thus proposing to ignore the real leader of the party, was putting herself in a position from which she would have to retreat. He knew that neither Hartington nor Granville would agree to form a ministry, that Gladstone had been chosen by the vote of the people, and that for the Sovereign to endeavor to dispute this on a mere technicality would bring the Crown into the arena of party politics. Had he been unscrupulous, or even less magnanimous than his nature prompted, the Prince might have stood aside and watched the mother who would not admit him to her confidence take a line that could only end in defeat or even in the abdication she sometimes threatened. But instead he labored to persuade the Queen to act as the spirit of the constitution demanded.

For three critical days he used all the arts of a diplomacy that was now tempered in the fire of experience. He showed no impatience at his mother's obstinacy, or even at his having to influence her through Colonel Ponsonby, her private secretary, instead of being in a position to write to her directly. The nearest he came to showing irritation was in a note written by Francis Knollys, his private secretary, to Lord Granville: "If the Queen would only look upon Mr. Gladstone as a friend instead of as the enemy of Her Majesty and the Royal Family which Prince Leopold<sup>1</sup> deliberately delights in persuading her he is, she will find him all she could wish."

With his intimate, Lord Hartington, the finest specimen of the aristocrat in all the gallery of Victorian statesmen, the Prince held conversation after conversation in the recesses of the Turf Club. They took counsel together, — the Prince of Wales and the descendant of the Whig Earl of Devonshire who had helped to seal the victory of Parliament over the Crown when William of Orange became King, — how the Sovereign should be brought to reason. Con-

<sup>1</sup> The Prince, in spite of this, professed himself a Liberal.

sideration and solicitude for the Queen marked their anxious deliberations. The Prince, in his self-imposed office of mediator, left nothing unwritten that could appeal to her instincts as a Queen and a woman. Lord Hartington was anxious that she should send for Mr. Gladstone . . . it would get over many difficulties . . . create a stronger government than any H. could form. . . .

He pointed out — always to Colonel Ponsonby, who made a perfect buffer — that Gladstone also felt for the Queen in her difficult position, that nothing could be nicer than the way he had spoken to Lord Hartington about her having to part with her present ministers, in whom she had such confidence. “Depend upon it, it is a matter of the gravest import,” added the Prince, adopting a higher line, “whom the Queen sends for to form a Government. . . . Far better that she should take the initiative [of sending for Gladstone] than that it should be forced upon her.” Such notes, some scrawled in pencil late at night, testify to the piety and the statesmanship of a Prince whom many still thought to be unequal to the responsibilities of his position. .

The issue came as the Prince desired, though he would have wished for a more gracious end. The Queen sent for Lord Hartington, received from him a prompt refusal, agreed to discuss the matter with him and Lord Granville, and, finding that they could only give her the same advice as her son had already given her, entrusted the formation of the new ministry to Gladstone. But she showed no more desire than before to allow her heir any except the ceremonial portion of the monarch’s duties.

## IX

### THE NEW DECORUM

At the age of forty the Prince might feel that he had done little enough to satisfy ambition. He had talked over Gambetta and helped to reinstall Gladstone, now growing into the G. O. M., in Downing Street. But such sporadic incursions as he made into high politics could not prevent him from realizing that his position shut him out from any real power; and anything that he might manage to accomplish by his unofficial intervention was necessarily unknown except to a few. To his future subjects he stood solely as a social figure: the "first gentleman in Europe" was a favorite description of the journalists, as they recorded his endless peregrinations round England and the Continent.

Yet even in this rôle his influence seemed to have made little change in Mayfair and Belgravia. Dullness remained the keynote of the London season. People entertained because they were born to it; it was one of the duties, not one of the pleasures, of life. The great mid-Victorian routs were the canonization of mediocrity. No one attempted to have a good time — indeed, to have done so would have been voted vulgar. One party was like another. Powdered footmen shouted your name, the lady of the house received you at the top of the stairs, and then you became "one amongst a crowd of men and women as silent as yourself." The balls, nightly affairs, were solemn stupid crushes "without a scintilla of the gayety" which the vivacity of American women imparted to similar functions in New York and Boston. In a word, Henry Adams, whose judgments are here quoted, found London society, which he revisited after fifteen years of the Prince's primacy, as dingy as ever.



It was the fault of the English women who allowed their individuality to be repressed under the conventions imposed by masculine tyranny. They were hampered by etiquette, the *débutantes* frightened that they would be left behind in the struggle of the marriage market if they behaved in any way which could be labeled as bad form, — a favorite and awful accusation, — and their sisters who had already reached the haven of matrimony upholding the canons of a society in which they had found a niche. "In our day," said Lady Ripon, looking back on the time when as Lady de Grey she had played her part in that Victorian world, "women hid their lovers' photographs and put their husbands' on the mantelpiece. Nowadays, they display their lovers' pictures and bury their husbands' in the bottom of their boxes."

Society damsels were divided into two classes — the V. G.'s and the N. V. G.'s. The Very-Good were thought to make the better wives; there was nothing really wrong about the Not-Very-Good except that they joked, laughed, flirted, and were pretty. But these had to be careful. When one of them rode in the Park in a riding habit that was rather shorter than usual, a cynical male declared that a strict love of veracity would prevent him from making an affidavit that she was not attired in trousers. It was the first hint of neo-Georgian immodesty.

The New Woman was just beginning to be a subject of jest. Florence Nightingale, it is true, did not excite smiles, and George Eliot showed both in life and in letters that the same moral and intellectual standards should be applied indifferently to either sex. But her friend Barbara Leigh Smith, who wanted to give her sisters the brain which the Victorian novelist most eminent in the delineation of feminine character declared they lacked, drew the shafts of masculine ridicule. Girton was too dangerous to be taken seriously. Besides, everyone knew that women were

naturally frail. Shakespeare had said so. And an Anglican cleric of the High Church Party, preaching with all the authority of a spiritual doctor to whom penance in the confessional was a sacrament necessary to salvation, could declare from the mid-Victorian pulpit that he "had it on the authority of priests well able to judge that one man in seven was pure in thought and only one woman in thirteen." The disproportion was too striking to need emphasis. Yet, in spite of all this, the issue between the sexes, joined half a century ago, resulted in some striking victories at almost the first encounter.

The Prince was by no means neutral. Without troubling about the wider implications to which sex equality might lead, he threw himself whole-heartedly on the side of the new influences that were beginning to work behind the masculine façade, in the background where power was disputed between duchesses and domestics — some thought to the advantage of the domestics. His visit to India is said to have been the instrument of his conversion. In that country of sharp contrasts, of high lights and deep shadows, of caste and rigid social distinctions, some assert that he paradoxically began to question the inelastic differentiations which prevailed in England. This doubt was not borne in on him by the rajahs, whose courtly bearing contrasted with the "rude and rough manner" which the English officials showed to all Indians alike. He reprobated such an attitude, so different from the easy life of the cantonments. It was there, in the social intercourse of the paradise of unconventionality which Anglo-Indian society has fashioned for itself in its favorite retreats, that he is first said to have unbent before the charms of young matrons who enjoyed a freedom unknown at home. How far the cautious investigator can assign to impressions received by the Prince in India the liberty which he inculcated by his example not long after his return is open to doubt. It is probable that in any case he would have wel-

comed the ladies who towards the end of the seventies introduced a new and picturesque element into society. Certainly the more liberal views he showed in the interpretation of what constituted social eligibility assisted the rise of the professional beauties and enabled a pioneer of her sex to achieve a sudden and dazzling triumph. How Mrs. Langtry, the daughter of a Jersey clergyman, took the great world by storm with nothing but her beauty and a single black dress is a romance. It also marks the climacteric of Victorianism. Mrs. Langtry came, was seen, and conquered. Not only was she peerless in beauty, possessing a body perfect in its sensuous rhythms, a Greek loveliness being heightened by a brilliant complexion, the whitest of skins, the finest of hair. Her beauty was also of a new type, challenging the languishing conventions of the rosebud mouth, the too large eyes, the sloping shoulders that went to form the old ideal of clinging femininity. This more exquisite Trilby was not less happily endowed in character and temperament. Liveliness and high spirits adorned a Shakespearean kindness which disarmed hostility and almost dispelled jealousy. She was pertinacious rather than ambitious, intelligent rather than clever, easy-going to all except Mr. Langtry, and she possessed a social flair that rarely failed her. Success did not turn the head of this sensible woman who, after seeing society at her feet, laboriously tried to carve out for herself a career on the stage.

The merit of her discovery has been awarded to Sir Allen Young. Of the royal family, Prince Leopold was the first to come within her orbit. He met her in the Isle of Wight and they used to go cruising in the Queen's yacht, hiding below till they were out of sight of the Osborne House telescopes. Over his bed he hung a profile drawing of the charmer, which his mother, coming one day to visit her youngest-born, who suffered from chronic invalidism, espied and removed there and then, standing on a chair to do so. Mrs. Langtry was a

woman too beautiful for any mother of sons to look upon without disquiet; and too beautiful for London not to claim. To appear at the opera, her untousled hair lying in a nuque on the nape of her neck, a vision of unbejeweled and divinely fresh womanhood, was to lift herself at once into a cynosure. After one such evening she went on to a supper party. She has related how she and Mr. Langtry and the few other guests were waiting when she heard a deep and cheery voice saying, "I'm afraid I am a little late." It was the Prince of Wales. She sat next to him at the supper table. They got on famously together and from that moment her position was made.

She leaped into a fame which at first no shadows of dress-makers' bills darkened. Women paid her the compliment of infinite curiosity in spite of her having only one evening dress. All men admired her; many paid her court. When she entered the ballroom at Devonshire House everybody crowded round to look at her, some of the polite world which had the entrée to that ducal mansion standing on chairs to obtain a better view. She rode in the Park and again provided a sensation — she was ravishing, even to the chic of her habit. The Prince of Wales, who also used to be seen in the Row at the fashionable hour of seven in the evening, would invite her to join him and they would ride up and down together, a notable conjunction of rank and beauty. Enjoying the company and the exercise, the Prince would delay dismissing this Sylvia, who thus found herself in the awkward predicament of keeping some dinner party hanging on her appearance.

Once he kept her till after nine when she was expected by a hostess of Belgravia at half-past eight. Given a tardy *congé*, she hurried home to a grumbling husband. What would people say of such unpunctuality? There was no rudeness like that of being late for dinner. She threw herself into the black dress and they hurried with all the

speed of a hansom to their party — an hour after their time. There came a bad moment when they were announced and found the company still assembled in the drawing-room. But all was well. Their hostess had heard that she had been riding in the Park with the Prince, had expected she would be late, and the cook had taken her measures accordingly. Thus did news travel in a London still innocent of telephones.

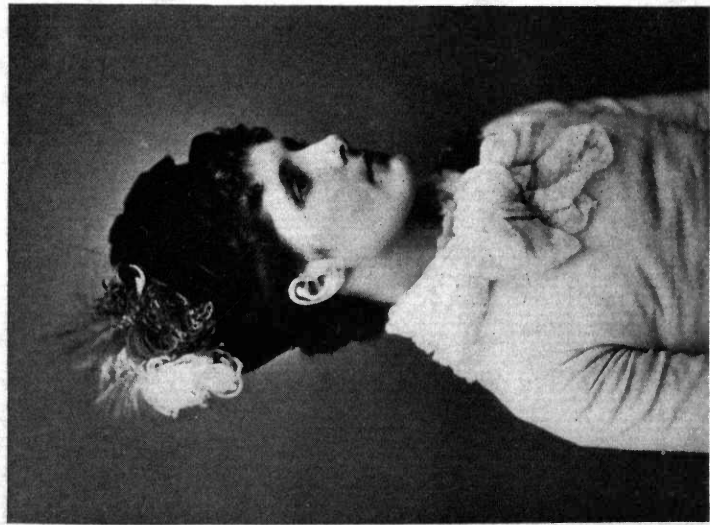
Mrs. Langtry was not a solitary phenomenon. She only led the chosen company of those who came to be called the professional beauties, a sobriquet given them from their capacity "to rivet the attention of the central figure of society." She had rivals, too, and in her first season there were some who declared that Mrs. Wheeler outshone her and had already achieved almost as high a photographic fame. But Mrs. Langtry had become an inspiration to others besides the photographers who considered it essential to have a studio portrait of her in their windows. Millais painted her in the black dress, a Jersey lily, holding in her hand that white flower of purity. The title was confusing. "Nobody seems to understand," said *Truth*, "that the point in Mr. Millais's portrait of Mrs. Langtry lies in the circumstance that Lily is the lady's Christian name." She gave a new vogue to the symbolical flower. The young Oscar Wilde, poor, and thrilling to a sense of the beautiful which a false Platonism had not corrupted, used to carry her the finest his purse could afford, and, being seen thus holding a single bloom in his hand, was marked down by the Philistine Gilbert as that laughable thing, an æsthete.

There was nothing in the least precious about Lillie Langtry, or she would never have taken the Prince's fancy. On the contrary, she was an artless young woman, at times almost a hoyden, ready to share in the innocent mischief which the Prince loved, and to laugh at the practical jokes that beguiled country-house parties. He and his cousin of the royal caste, the Prince Imperial, indulged in many

together at Cowes, where she stayed in Mrs. Cust's cottage. She has left us a picture of the young Napoleon IV climbing through a window and emptying bags of flour over the Prince of Wales. Another shows us the two princes hoisting a donkey into the bedroom belonging to the son of the house, where they dressed the animal up and put him to bed. Such merriment was characteristic of the time.

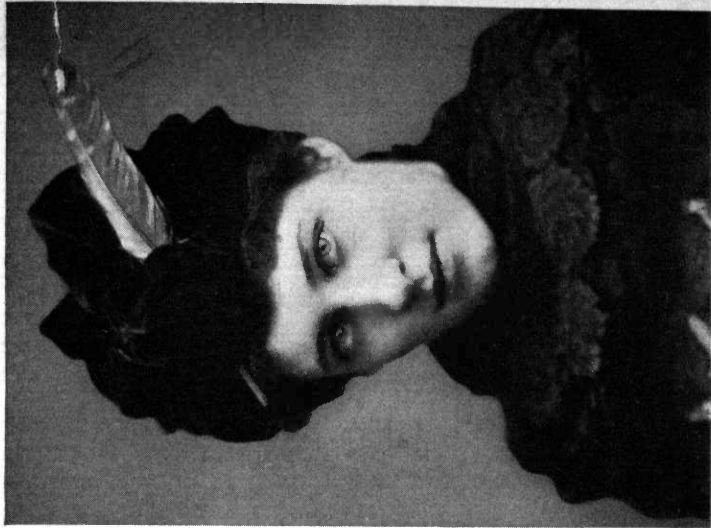
Not that life always ran in such naïvely youthful channels. When at Lord Malmesbury's, she wrote a letter which Mr. Langtry — whom she described as a "fat and uninteresting man" — read by the simple process of holding the blotting paper before a mirror. The contents, harmless yet indiscreet, made him cross. Mrs. Langtry cried. Always frank, she told her trouble to her host, whose sympathy towards her was as keen as his anger with the servants, for, as he explained, he had given strict orders to the servants to renew the blotting paper throughout the house every day to prevent such a *contretemps*. In the end Mr. Langtry dropped out of the picture, in which the Prince of Wales so often had a place, for as she followed the fashionable round that led from London to Goodwood, from Goodwood to Cowes and then to Scotland, people remarked that, where was H. R. H., there too she always seemed to be. Such coincidences were identified with indiscretion on her part. But she might also be censured for the conduct of others, as at the Northern Meeting. There her presence caused vast excitement and not a little comment when the black dress, now of satin, was almost torn from her body by her partners' furious antics which passed for waltzing. It was not surprising that she left early after such an example of Highland vigor.

New ideas of decorum were coming in. Mrs. Langtry was talked about; she was generous in her favors, but it made no difference to her position. Though her husband faded away, her father, the handsome Dean of Jersey, gave the prestige of the church to her tea table. Gladstone went and read



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MRS. LANGTRY





Shakespeare to her, she carried the cachet of Marlborough House, and in her second season she was presented at Court. Those who wished to make their curtsy to the Queen in person had to arrive early, as Her Majesty found the fatigue, or the ennui, of the Drawing-Rooms trying, and usually after a time gave up her place to the Princess of Wales. Mrs. Langtry, however, who may have inspired Wilde to say that to be punctual is to be undistinguished, arrived late and was one of the last to pass the presence. She was rather frightened of the Queen and perhaps hoped thus to avoid her. If this were her intention, it remained unfulfilled. For the Queen was still there, looking straight in front of her as Mrs. Langtry kissed her hand. Not a flicker of a smile upon the face of Majesty indicated the royal curiosity which, the Prince of Wales assured her that same evening, had caused the Queen to stay in order to see the reigning beauty.

The "professionals" were of many kinds. The famous Mrs. W—— (so the Victorians spiced their scandal) was more careful than Mrs. Langtry and preferred to rebuff the Prince rather than be a subject for gossip. The equally famous Madame K——, going to the other extreme, scandalized the breakfast party at Chatsworth, where she had been invited to meet the Prince. A Russian, and noted for her willowy figure, she appeared in a blouse which to their Victorian eyes appeared transparent. The Roman Catholic Mrs. W——, on the other hand, would scandalize no one. She refused to drive with the Prince when he called for her in his private brougham. He urged her not to mind what people said, pointing out that they said all sorts of things about him and he did n't care. "Perhaps not, Sir," was her reply, "but so far they say nothing about me and I don't mean that they should." Such a woman had character deserving the Prince's commendation as he made known the story of his failure, and when she died he attended her Requiem Mass. But they were not always so sure of themselves, and the

difficulty of the *métier* still echoes in the hysterics which overcame one of their number in the cloakroom at a Marlborough House Ball.

As on one side the old narrow frontiers were widened by the advent of ladies with more or less titular husbands, on another the fortifications of Mayfair were stormed by the phalanx of fair Americans anxious for the amenities which, despite Henry Adams, they found more plentiful in Europe. American men were rough diamonds. One could often hardly take their manners seriously, as when Grant Junior, visiting Windsor Castle with his sire, the ex-President, and fidgeting in the drawing-room after dinner at being kept away from the royal hearthrug, exclaimed: "I say, Father, just introduce me to the Queen right away." Her Majesty laughed. What else could she do? The Duke of Somerset, in his pamphlet on Monarchy and Democracy, declared that the educated class of Americans were in culture and refinement on a level with the best society in Europe, but the ducal judgment showed that others did not share his opinion and needs to be read with the dictum of an American, recorded thirty years later, that Americans were social pariahs in England until King Edward made England into their social paradise.

The question whether Americans were barbarians did not trouble a Prince who liked them enormously, for they could tell a good story and were born card players. General Dick Taylor, one of the Confederate major generals, was firmly established in the Marlborough House set for his prowess in these respects, though it was his skill at whist rather than at poker, then first creeping into London as the result of the transatlantic invasion, that the Prince appreciated. And whatever might be thought of the men, there was no question of the charms possessed by young and unmarried American women. They had everything to commend them. As a contemporary observer bluntly put it, they were not so

squeamish as their English sisters and more able to take care of themselves; they were livelier, better educated, and less hampered by etiquette. The glory of the professional beauties waned before their onset. Some only came to taste the fruits of the Old World before returning to plant themselves in the New. One heiress who refused many offers expressed it epigrammatically: "I am writing my declensions. This London is a good enough sort of a place for flirtations, but I mean to conjugate at home." Many, however, were ready to conjugate with the scions of English families and to graft the vigor of their race and wealth upon such old and sometimes needy stock.

They could count on the Prince's favor, high in which soon stood one of the most brilliant of them, Lady Randolph Churchill — a more notable attraction since, according to Sir Charles Dilke, detestation of Lord Randolph had been the only point, except the government of London, on which the Prince agreed with the Liberals. But "the social address" of Lady Randolph and the Prince's rising admiration for her husband's parliamentary skill, whereby he was plaguing Gladstone as the leader of the Fourth Party, put an end to his animosity against that brilliant specimen of an unstable family.

Homburg was a favorite place for Americans anxious to enjoy the Prince's society, though as the growing wealth of the Middle West produced its plentiful crop of millionaires the unblushing openness with which their daughters manoeuvred for this end severely taxed his amiable gallantry. None of these could compare with the charming Miss Chamberlayne who had shed her sweetness on the fashionable European resorts some years before. The Prince admired her above everything. When it was reported that he had gone to Cannes to see Mr. Gladstone, then in continual trouble over his foreign policy, the readers of the society papers knew better. He certainly did see the Prime Min-

ister, meeting him and his family on Sunday morning outside the English church and "talking endlessly" whilst an admiring crowd stood round. But he also saw Mr., Mrs., and Miss Chamberlayne. With these well-to-do-Cleveland people etiquette was reduced to a minimum. When he called upon them, father, mother, and daughter rose and made a profound obeisance. Then, as the American journalists declared, ceremony was thrown aside and he was just like any other man; they all sat and talked together, a happy and inseparable party. Their fierce Middle West accent, which grated on New England ears, did not disturb the Prince. Neither did he worry about their exclusion from the best society in their own country. It was enough that Miss Chamberlayne was a beauty, a superb creature who nourished her young womanhood on a diet which for breakfast comprised two eggs, a fried sole, a beefsteak, and a quantity of potatoes — Monte Carlo failing to provide her with the buckwheat cakes and molasses for which her ardent appetite longed.

The Prince seemed to have taken the whole family into his affections, whilst the friends of the Chamberlaynes asserted that these considered him to be the most unsophisticated and agreeable man they had ever met. Miss Chamberlayne, who did not conjugate in England, attained sufficient fame to figure as the heroine in *Miss Beyle's Romance*, a best-seller of the time. Apart from that doubtful distinction, she stands as the most characteristic of the young women who upheld the honor of the New World in its assault on the Old.

Naturally, the Prince of Wales was talked about. No one knew it better than himself, and no one, perhaps, cared less. Was he not helping to break down barriers, to level the hedges between the narrow fields into which social life was still divided, to prepare the way for a freer and more cosmopolitan era? Yet old prejudices died hard, and even those

ladies who moved in his circle and submitted to his influence sometimes jibbed at quite a small fence. There was Sarah Bernhardt, for instance — a great artist whom it behooved all the world to honor, not least the world of fashion wherein actresses hitherto had not been permitted to move. A party was arranged for her and its success seemed assured, since the idea originated with the Duc d'Aumale, whose social prestige was immense, and the English ladies had been invited at the distinct request of the Prince of Wales. These leaders of the advanced guard of society could surely be counted upon to play their part worthily in this experiment. The event proved otherwise. They yielded to the Prince's wishes and went to the party. Their complaisance took them no further. For when they got there they refused to talk to Sarah, and she, on her part, replied with an equally obstinate *mutisme*. The Duc d'Aumale's deafness prevented him from appreciating, or saving, the situation. And so nobody said anything at all. This fiasco went to show that progress must be slow, that change in the social, as in the political, sphere must be a thing of growth, not something merely imposed from above.

## X

### THE SQUIRE OF SANDRINGHAM

THE Prince of Wales could more readily allow himself the liberties of unconventionality since these were set against a solid and decorous background of family and domestic life. He shone in all its varied relations, as son, husband, and father. Towards his august mother he stood, in small things as in great, a model of filial piety. As heir to the throne, his attitude was marked by a deep and tender respect that tried to lighten the cares of state, which his sovereign was disinclined to share. He showed an unfailing dutifulness as a son, even to his respect for the rule against smoking in his mother's house. Not he, but Prince Henry of Battenberg, got leave at last to smoke in the billiard room at Windsor Castle, a valued concession, though prudence counseled the sucking of a lozenge before returning to the drawing-room. Victorian nostrils were so easily offended by the fumes of tobacco that Gladstone's son and secretary, when summoned from his desk to his father's presence, changed his coat lest the smell of smoke should offend that keen nose.

There was always an old-fashioned formality about the relations between the mother and her children — a proper mingling of fear and love which maybe is the only sound basis for family life. The Prince sometimes had to stand up to the Queen, but that did not interfere with the infinite respect he always showed her. It was a respect so instinctive that it came out even in crises where behavior, as a rule, gives way before primitive emotion. We see him and his youngest brother entering their mother's presence the evening before

the death of the Princess Alice, which took place on December 14, that ill-fated day in the royal calendar. They brought good news. But neither this, nor their common and overwhelming anxiety, made them forget that they were not in full evening dress, and the Queen herself noticed the "sort of smoking jackets" they wore and for which they made many excuses. This only indicated a royal regard for the proprieties upon which civilized society rests. Beneath it lay the anguish of heart that made the Prince weep soon afterwards for the loss of his favorite sister. The depth of this family affection is portrayed in the Queen's account of "Bertie's despair." As she kissed him she said: "It is the good who are always taken." The record of such moments as these goes far to dispel the legends of the Queen's harshness towards her eldest son.

Yet she upheld every tittle of parental authority which gave the era its moral fibre. She was a good Victorian, not least in the tight hold she kept of her purse strings. But though the Prince suffered from her relentlessness in money matters, he never complained that she did not herself adequately recognize the additional burdens which her seclusion placed upon him. Mr. Gladstone, whose opinion on anything to do with pounds, shillings, and pence deserves to be treated with the highest respect, thought that she should have allowed him £50,000 a year. Her failure to make any such provision caused the Prince's budget to be habitually in a state which Mr. Micawber declared to be the root of all unhappiness. The Prince, however, resembled Mr. Micawber in not really minding. If there was jealousy, there was magnanimity, too, on the part of the Queen, who loved her eldest son with all his hot Guelph blood. Her letters of the eighties and nineties bear constant reference to his goodness of heart, and such anger as he sometimes moved her to seems to have been much milder than the contemporary gossip of the jobations which she was said to visit upon him.

The word was used by the Prince himself when he had to encounter his mother's prejudices against his going to race meetings — an old bone of contention. The Queen did not like his racing friends, and in 1870 made what we may believe was a final effort to wean him from them. Ascot was the terrain she chose. "Dearest Bertie," she wrote, ". . . now that the Ascot races are approaching I wish to repeat earnestly and seriously . . . confine your *visits* to the two days, Tuesday and Thursday and not go on Wednesday and Friday. . . . If you are anxious to go on those *two* great days (though I should prefer your not going *every year* to *both*) there is no *real* objection to *that*, but to the other days there is. Your example can do *much* for good and may do an immense deal for evil. . . . I hear every true and attached friend expressing *such* anxiety that you should gather round you the really good, steady and distinguished people." The Prince would not give way. "I fear, dear Mama, that no year goes round without your giving me a jobation on the subject of racing. . . . I am always most anxious to meet your wishes, dear Mama, in every respect, and always regret if we are not quite d'accord — but I am past twenty-eight and have some considerable knowledge of the world. . . ." The letters do credit to the sincerity both of mother and son.

*Les rois ont leur morale propre.* Any shortcomings of his mother towards himself could be extenuated by such a maxim, which also guided King Edward in those relations which rank next in ethical importance to a son's duty towards his parents. He was fortunate in his Princess, whose gentle character and tranquil charm offered a striking contrast to the qualities popularly attributed to the ladies in the Marlborough House set. The Prince was well aware how much the Princess, whose deafness, even before she reached the threshold of middle age, began to cause her to hold slightly aloof, contributed to disarm criticism and to strengthen the people's affection for their royal family. "She possesses a



soul as perfect as her face, which you must know is very sweet and beautiful" — the Prince's pen rarely framed sentences that rang like this. She was the model wife, lovely, gracious, maternal, eschewing cleverness, never talking politics, utterly without assumption — a lady who could have no enemies, an ideal to stir the imagination of the humbler sisters who led drab and unromantic lives. No Princess in story could be more perfectly fitted for the part. If the multitude did not know that this beautiful woman who bore her royal dignity so becomingly could unbend and romp in her family circle, her laughter at Newstead had its echoes in many a servants' hall.

She and the Prince were visiting the Abbey, and when they reached the haunted chamber she showed a healthy excitement which the ghostly occupant did not appear to reciprocate.

"A haunted room is nothing without a ghost," she said, and, to give the apparition an excuse for offering a mark of its respect, she began to poke with her parasol in a recess near the bed.

Something moved. Then not a ghost but two housemaids rushed out, their cheeks suffused in anything but a ghostly pallor. One ran away. The other threw her apron over her head, and Prince and Princess laughed consumedly.

At Crichel, where they went to stay, the hostess was more careful, and the servants received special lessons in deportment. Society owed much to its regiments of domestics and requited the debt niggardly, with low wages and atrocious accommodation. The well-trained company of one hundred and twenty at Marlborough House were paid a little more than the usual rate, but the glory of their livery was not to be reckoned in terms of money, and during King Edward's reign their master's frequent journeys on the Continent gave them a European reputation amongst their conservative caste. One or two might dream of having a place in the

story above stairs. John Brown, the Queen's ghillie, was noticed by ministers, portrayed by cartoonists, and has since figured in literature. King Edward gave no such invidious favor to his menials. But Mr. Church, valued and trusted both by his master and mistress, helped to make the machinery of the Edwardian Court work smoothly, and Mr. Chandler acted as whipping boy on whom the King could vent irritation, annoyance, and anger harmlessly, expeditiously, and without for a moment disturbing his valet's serenity; a man, too, of solid sense, who would not allow his sovereign to have his waistcoats made smaller after Marienbad had slimmed the royal figure, on the ground that it would soon regain the pounds it had lost. It was a perfectly ordered household at whose head stood those "two Great Pillars of Wisdom and Judgment," Francis (afterwards Lord) Knollys and Sir Dighton Probyn — a household testifying to the genial rule of its master by service that generally lasted until death.

As the ruler of a family, the Prince tempered kindness with a paternal severity. It was not often in London that he could gratify one of the desires recorded in his Golden Book — to spend a quiet evening at home with the Princess and the children. Maybe in expressing this wish he bowed the knee to an unroyal conventionality. But his enjoyment of young parenthood is recorded in his hurrying away from a debate in the House of Lords to take the Princess and their four children to the circus. And a paternal pride, worthy of the Bourbons at their best, inspired him through life — a pride that rated convention as of small moment beside the essential tie that united a father and his child, and caused him sometimes to cherish the offspring which he mistakenly thought to be his.

He had no illusions about education, and was in this respect a wiser, if less conscientious, parent than his father had been. His two sons were not inflicted with the régime

he had undergone. The Queen favored a public school, — for choice, Wellington, which had associations with the Prince Consort, — but the Prince of Wales decided upon the navy, and the boys entered the old and unhealthy three-decker *Britannia*, after submitting to a satisfactory entrance examination. A tutor had charge of them; in other respects they were treated like ordinary naval cadets — a change indeed from the seclusion that had been the most irksome part of their father's upbringing. They were allowed no special privileges, and the Queen, now grown an indulgent grandmother, was unable to persuade her son to allow them to interrupt their studies for her birthday celebrations at Balmoral. Neither did her doubts of the wisdom of sending them on world tours in training ships cause her son to change his mind. The Prince believed, with Bacon, that "travel, in the younger sort, is a part of education," and his sons therefore sailed the seven seas and beheld an empire that was just beginning to be self-conscious of its world destiny. His ideas of what became neophyte Princes by no means coincided with those of his mother, who wished them to avoid the ceremonial that the Prince rather welcomed on their behalf. They could not learn the technique of their vocation too young. And he overlooked no lapse. Sometimes as the two boys flitted across the larger stage of London we have a glimpse of them under rebuke or punishment. One anecdote tells how Prince Eddie,<sup>1</sup> visiting the Grosvenor Galleries with his parents, suffered the impatient suppression of his father for a boyish joke about two adjacent pictures — Mary of Modena and Mary the Madonna — which brought his mother to the rescue. Another tells how Prince George<sup>2</sup> made his social début at a Marlborough House Ball. The merry and noisy young midddy had an immense success. Then he disappeared, and someone asked the Prince of Wales where he was. "Do not tell anyone,"

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Duke of Clarence.

<sup>2</sup> Now King George V.

his father answered, "but I saw him kissing a girl on the stairs just now, so I sent him to bed."

"Nice creatures" is how Mary Gladstone describes the Princes in her diary, after they had paid a visit with their father to 10, Downing Street, where she took them to see the Cabinet Room. Neither was very robust. Prince Eddie grew up delicate and reserved, a good deal in awe of his father, quiet and not very easy to make friends with, though he gained the sobriquet of "Collars and Cuffs" rather for his emphatic exploitation of the contemporary male fashion than for any stiffness of manner. "Sprats," a patronymic of obvious derivation, was the nickname of Prince George, who at that time looked forward to making the navy his profession.

The Prince of Wales decided that his elder son should follow the military career which had been denied to himself, sending him previously to Cambridge, where he lived in College rooms at Trinity, an undergraduate first, a Prince of the Blood only in the assiduity with which his society was cultivated by the senior members of the University. He served in the 10th Hussars, but hardly had time to impress a complex personality upon the popular imagination before he died suddenly from influenza. His death at the age of twenty-eight was the greatest blow his father ever suffered, and the memory of his elder son remained very dear to him to the end of his life. Its poignancy was heightened by the fact that, shortly before, he had been affianced to his cousin, Princess Mary of Teck, a great-granddaughter of George III. The subsequent betrothal of Prince George to the Princess gave him "great gratification," which was increased when the issue of the marriage made the succession in the direct line secure. A belief in the virtue of the blood royal was at the foundation of the Prince of Wales's views on the duties and the delights of kingship.

But it was at Sandringham that the Prince of Wales could

best enjoy the pleasures that centre in the hearth; there on the estate which he made into a model of its kind he realized the ambition to live upon his own which fired Shakespeare and Pope and Scott no less than Bacon, Burleigh, and the dramatized Englishman, Disraeli. England's country houses, great and small, have always stood for something unique in the national life, and at any rate since the monasteries were destroyed at the Reformation have formed the repository of a culture which has never been quite at home in cities. To this day the Englishman likes to be accorded the title of esquire — so hardly does the tradition of centuries die. And during the Victorian era, although industry had gone far to destroy the old life which saw nothing ill in inequality, the castles and the great houses, standing in their parks, excited among the wise "the reverent and healthy delight of uncovetous admiration." So sensitively did Ruskin react to the traditions they embodied that, whilst deploring the absenteeism already growing noticeable, he never made up his mind to visit America: he "could not even for a couple of months live in a country so miserable as to possess no castles."

Sandringham House was not a castle. But it offered all the amenities of a life which had lost a good deal of the homespun and Attic qualities of the English grandee's heyday when statesmen out of office withdrew to their country seats and read Homer, — a tradition maintained by Mr. Gladstone, — collected old masters, cultivated turnips, and tried to make the conservative peasantry acquire a liking for potatoes. The Victorian era was unable to produce this compound of refinement and rusticity, which in any case would have been antipathetic to the Prince's temperament. Yet if life at Sandringham suffered from the common failings of a cultured age which was curiously insensible to beauty in its surroundings and liked repletion, whether in its sport, its furniture, or its gastronomy, it had also the ease that reflected

the personality of the master who ordered it. "I arrived," says a bishop of his visit in the early seventies, "just as they were all at tea in the entrance hall, and had to walk in all seedy and disheveled from my day's journey and sit down by the Princess of Wales. . . . I find the company pleasant and civil, but we are a curious mixture. Two Jews, Sir Anthony de Rothschild and his daughter, an ex-Jew, Disraeli; a Roman Catholic, Colonel Higgins; an Italian Duchess who is an Englishwoman and her daughter, brought up a Roman Catholic and now turning Protestant; a set of young lords and a bishop. . . ."

During almost the half century that the Prince made Sandringham his home, an illustrious company sat as his guests round the tea table in the hall full of the sporting trophies he had collected in three continents. The Prince, in so many things a cosmopolitan, was thoroughly English in his enjoyment of the one repast which is native to England. It had so many charms, an informality both of substance and of spirit that was entirely to his taste. Conversation was unhampered by barriers of plate and flowers, and one could talk all the time, whereas at dinner the serious duties of the table only allowed this between the courses. The gourmand, too, could find surprise as well as satisfaction in the artless-looking sandwich and solace in the *petits fours* and the preserved ginger. The ladies, for their part, recognizing that the occasion gave them an excellent opportunity of displaying their charms, soon produced the Victorian tea gown, flowing and voluminous with its suggestion of dishabille, a sartorial twilight bridging the gulf between the walking tailor-made costume and the chic of the evening décolleté.

At the Sandringham house parties in the eighties, the fashionable beauties would appear every afternoon in some new and elaborate creation. It was at afternoon tea that the Victorian women attempted to redress the balance of a society which was still predominantly male, and conversation



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would make way for music, or be further incited by it, until it was time to retire and rest preparatory to dinner, where precedence again ruled. We have a picture of that pleasant hour in which Lady Randolph Churchill and the Princess played Brahms waltzes, no small test of duettist's skill, even for hands a good deal cleverer on the keyboard than those of their daughters and granddaughters. Then Signor Tosti entranced the company by singing his own melodious ballads which appealed to the more facile sentiment that moved in the Victorian soul.

It was all *sans façon* — even the dogs at tea time threw off etiquette. Many years later the behavior of the Princess's Italian greyhound nearly caused Mr. James Knowles, the editor of the *Nineteenth Century*, to be forcibly conducted from the royal presence. The dog used to upset the cream jug and then lick up the contents. On this occasion he had overturned one jug and was meditating an attack on another which stood by Mr. Knowles.

The Princess, who was watching the delinquent, rang the bell. An enormously tall footman appeared. "Take him out," she said, pointing in Mr. Knowles's direction. The footman hesitated. "Remove him," said the Princess more peremptorily. The man stepped forward and put out his hand to seize the eminent journalist by the shoulder, who, all unaware of the fate threatening him, went on quietly eating buttered toast. Something like a shadow of anxiety passed across the Princess's face. Then she grasped the situation. "No, take the dog out," she added, as everyone, except the still unsuspecting victim, laughed at the narrow escape he had suffered.

Guests did not usually run such risks, though the neighborhood hoped, when Mr. Gladstone's solemn face appeared at Sandringham Church on Sundays, that one or two of the practical jokes which rumor had it were played up at the great house might fall to his lot — flour on his pillow or some

sticky sweets in the pockets of his tails. Disraeli was more of a local favorite, in spite of always looking bored, and also Sir Anthony de Rothschild, who gloried in his state of country gentleman. But Bernal Osborne was the most popular, a sardonic wit distributing his good things even to the local worthies, using a bludgeon in his old age that once drove Oscar Wilde from the supper table at which the Prince was a guest, much to the royal annoyance.

Mr. Gladstone seemed in church to bear the weight of the world on his shoulders, but for all that he enjoyed staying at Sandringham as much as anybody, not excluding Mrs. Gladstone, whom the Princess loved because she "wanted no names or stars for her William," tucking her up in bed with her own gracious hands to show the extent of her affection. The G. O. M. found the Prince "light in hand," a good listener, too good a whist player, and does not appear to have reprobated his own inclusion amongst the other eminent Victorians, Matthew Arnold, Lord Salisbury, and others, who figured in "very dubious attitudes" on the screen in the billiard room amongst nude ladies. He too, like all the guests, underwent the ordeal of the weighing machine under the eye of a Prince who could boast that he not only knew so many of his future subjects but also could remember how many stone they topped. Ladies were not exempt, though on one occasion the Prince admitted that it was very good of Lady Dalhousie "to consent to be weighed under the circumstances."

The Prince's passion for detail came out in all sorts of odd and kindly ways. He kept all the clocks half an hour fast to ensure punctuality, for which, like Louis XIV, he had a passion. He arranged where his guests were to sit at dinner and what rooms they were to occupy. A gouty and crotchety squire of the neighborhood, who regarded him with something of the contempt felt for a newcomer, was won over by being given a bedroom on the ground floor. He was his own

major-domo, to the extent of seeing that the fires were bright and the water hot in his guests' bedrooms. On one occasion Lord Fisher in his shirt sleeves was surprised by a visit from the King, coming to inquire if he had everything he wanted. The King seated himself by the fire and proceeded to talk with his admiral, who sat facing his sovereign across the hearth in this unconventional attire, until Lord Fisher had to tell his host and king that if he stayed any longer it would make a valetless guest late for dinner.

This at Sandringham remained the one formal function of the day. Yet its semi-state was not incompatible with important reforms in the matter of dining. The Prince of Wales in the fashion of his age was a notable trencherman, and he possessed the voracious Victorian appetite that in either sex was little inhibited by any fear of adiposity, a fear introduced by the Americans when they began a new chapter of dietetics with "reducing" and other idols of the "food-faddists." Such heresies of a reformed and protestant gastronomy never touched the Prince, who was content with paring some of the Gothic excrescences from the Victorian table. Almost his only addition, so history says, was that of brown bread to accompany oysters. He frowned on the sorbet which helped to revive flagging stomachs and make palates more receptive of the game that followed the roast. He was at one with the great Escoffier in condemning the savory, and he never looked with favor on the habit of drinking vintage claret after dinner, its essential barbarism being heightened by washing down a Lafite or a Margaux with a glass of "comet" port, the vintage of 1811, which had a bouquet of violets. He ended the practice by having cigarettes handed round when the ladies left the table, soon leading the way to the drawing-room where whist, or later bridge, called him; those who did not play cards could have an informal dance in the ballroom, the music on such occasions being provided by a musical box the handle of which the

Princess often condescended to turn. So the old Bacchic customs received their deathblow, and the introduction of champagne following a preliminary glass of sherry, capped by a glass of *fine* after dinner, set a fashion that has since prevailed without, perhaps, making that section of the English people which dines any nicer in its taste for food or wine.

Very formidable on paper seem the menus of those Sandringham dinner parties that found their way into the columns of the contemporary society papers. It is on record that for the Prince's fiftieth birthday dinner his guests had their choice of turtle, oxtail, or hare soup; the *relevés* included filleted soles, fried trout, salmon cutlet, Norfolk perch, East Coast oysters; the entrées were veal cutlets, stewed rabbits, stewed lambs' kidneys with fried Norfolk ham and mushrooms. . . . One need not pursue the progress of the feast to the poultry, the roast, and the game. Wonder at such prowess, which was indeed only typical, grows when the day is set out in gastronomic perspective, a day stretching back to what the plethoric men of that time called the good breakfast (of three courses), luncheon holding the middle afternoon, — taken on shooting days in a marquee where it was often prolonged by good cheer and good company, — and such collations as afternoon tea and sandwiches before bedtime filling in the longer fasts, with a slice of cold roast beef perhaps by the bedside to dispel any night famishment. Many fine digestions gave way under the strain. But in pathology if it is not one thing it is usually another, and the heirs of the Victorians suffer even more acutely from excess in other ways. Nerves, at least, in those times were sound and well covered.

So the Prince ordered largely, yet meticulously, the tenor of such private life as he was able to lead. Sandringham was not grand, like Chatsworth, or Hatfield, or Holkham; but its modernity was characteristic of its master, and everything about the grounds and the estate, the stables, the

kennels, with their borzoi retrievers and panting pugs, the church, the village with its club and model cottages, the very coverts, had a Horatian neatness. He was proud of his handiwork and on Sunday afternoons liked to show it to his guests. There was much to see: the gardens he had laid out (next to being what he was, he would have preferred to be a landscape gardener, stands as a royal *obiter dictum*); the greenhouses, "all built by Persimmon," as he would generously explain; the stud where that famous sire earned £125,000 in nine seasons until he died prematurely of exhaustion; the kennels in which the Princess kept many score of dogs of high degree; the bear pit, a sight of the eighties; the model dairy, an Edwardian Petit Trianon where the Princess would sometimes serve tea; the technical school presided over by the Fräulein from whom tactful guests were careful to make purchases. They had seen the Church in the morning. The ladies drove with the Princess to service at eleven, and the men walked with the Prince to a second matins which began at a quarter to twelve, all following the royal example and placing their walking sticks against a particular tombstone in the churchyard. He had a sharp eye to see that even dependents, to the last of the stableboys, was in his proper place. Sir Roger de Coverley was not stricter in this respect.

No previous Prince of Wales had thus planted himself in the soil, entertaining his neighbors as one of themselves, handing out negus to his tenants at moonlight ice parties, and giving invitations so freely to his dances that the county began to grumble that, if the royalties were making themselves cheap, they would not do likewise. An omnium-gatherum was not to their taste, and they stayed away until the Prince "read the Riot Act" and dissolved this local Fronde.

But everything else at Sandringham paled before the shooting. On a day the guns went out, the usual agricultural

work "stopped for miles around." The procession to the scene of operations included a company of boys with blue and pink flags, a band of gamekeepers in green and gold with the head keeper on horseback, an army of beaters in smocks and hats bound in royal red, and a caravan to convey the bag to the Sandringham larders. The Prince and his party took up their positions, the beaters drove the game towards the guns, the boys waved their flags to prevent the birds from flying back. For the fledglings which did not realize where the real danger lay it was hazardous sport, made still more hazardous by the skill of the "professionals," like Lord de Grey, who helped to "destroy the amenities of what was a pretty sport and turned it into a vulgar and arduous competition." The Prince himself made no pretense to such deadliness. But he identified himself with the intensive methods that set up new standards of game preserving and were irksome to farmers who suffered from the depredations of ground game and the damage done to fences and crops by the *battue* system.

Complaining tenants might excite the anger of their landlord, who suspected them of taking their revenge by surreptitious infractions of his forest law. It was often said of kings of England that they loved the red deer better than their subjects, and what the deer had once been, the partridges and the pheasants now were.

But graver afflictions that in the end cemented his love for Sandringham caused him at one time to think some evil genius of the place was abroad. His first bereavement as a father occurred there. The loss of the son who only lived a day drew from him a cry of pain. "I feel sure," he wrote to his mother, "you will feel for us in our sorrow, as it is a bitter pang to part with a little child who has hardly been twenty-four hours in the world. . . . We both of us quite broke down at the short and simple christening service yesterday evening." Soon afterwards he himself was struck down by typhoid and hung for weeks between life and death. When

a year or two later his equerry, Colonel Grey, suddenly succumbed to influenza, his sister, the Princess Alice, in writing to the Queen, hoped that her brother and sister-in-law would not give way to the idea of Sandringham being unlucky, "though so much that has been sad and trying has happened to them there." Superstition, she said, is surely a thing to fight against. The Prince and Princess conquered their scruples, despite the fact that the great sorrow of their life also came to them in the bleak air of those Norfolk heaths and meres, when in the winter of 1891-1892 the Duke of Clarence, elder brother of King George V, died of a chill contracted in that cold country. And it was on a raw spring day in the gardens of Sandringham that the King exposed himself to the bronchial infection which carried him off. Windsor is now the name of the Wettin dynasty founded by Edward VII. But Sandringham remains, as it has been, the scene of its family joys and its family sorrows.

## XI

### “ICH DIEN” — I SERVE

“ICH DIEN” — I serve. It was difficult to live up to his princely motto. To serve, to be of use, to see the monarchy, England, the Empire, transform themselves in the revolution that machinery and the processes of industry were making for humanity — these were his ambitions. He did not agree with Coventry Patmore that England was in its last lethargy, but he did believe that the time had come to shake off the old stereotyped ways and not to let things take their own course. His mother was herself an offender when she remained at Osborne through a ministerial crisis. What could be more inconvenient to ministers, or indeed derogatory to the prestige of the Crown? But when he urged Ponsonby to get Her Majesty to London, the private secretary answered that Dr. Jenner said the mere suggestion had made the Queen quite ill. No malicious humor by way of reply, but the glow of an “Albert afternoon” with Sir Theodore Martin, the Prince Consort’s biographer, caused her to order Ponsonby to reproach the Prince for not visiting Cowes: “It is only five hours from London and it does seem wrong that neither he, nor his children, come here often.”

This was at the top. Amidst the sediment of a prosperous England stood the proletariat, struggling for the necessities of life on wages which in the case of a laborer averaged sixteen, and in that of an artisan twenty-five, shillings a week. Sir Charles Dilke helped to awaken the Prince’s perceptions to the struggle, the appalling struggle, which the industrial chaos had created for the mass of his future



subjects, pullulating in the slums and the fever alleys of London and other cities. The most vital problem in domestic politics was that of housing. The working classes lived under conditions of indescribable squalor. Whole quarters of London were populated by families of six, eight, and ten living in single rooms, often working by day as well as sleeping by night in fetid dens sometimes no more than eight feet by ten. Drunkenness afforded the only escape, vice the only pleasure, for such wretchedness. Even in the agricultural districts things were little better, and the enormous fecundity which was the pride of the middle classes threw the families of the peasantry into a sinister and sometimes incestuous contiguity. At Sandringham, the Prince had for over twenty years shown his concern in improving the conditions of life for his tenantry, and in 1884, when both parties agreed that something should be done, he championed this overdue social reform. The only speech he ever delivered in the House of Lords was at the enrollment of a Royal Commission to investigate and report on the housing question — a brief and modest speech as befitted a royal peer who spoke in this matter simply as a conscientious landlord.

Mr. Gladstone, pleased to have found at last an opportunity for giving the Prince work to do, would have appointed him Chairman of the Commission, but this might have proved a task at once too arduous and too delicate for one in his position, and the Prince declared that he was much flattered by the invitation to serve under Sir Charles Dilke. He was anxious that one of his fellow Commissioners should be Miss Octavia Hill, an authority on housing, but the Liberal Premier, a Tory in inessentials, would not create the precedent of appointing a woman, and not until the Prince became King did he gain his point that women's peculiar knowledge in questions of social welfare should be thus used. In 1905 the same lady was one of three, another being Mrs.

Sidney Webb, who were appointed to sit on the Poor Law Commission of that year.

The Prince made an excellent Commissioner. At the outset he assisted in settling a point that was important if it had nothing to do with housing. Cardinal Manning and Lord Salisbury were both members of the Commission. Which ranked first? The one was a Prince of the Church, but a Church unrecognized by the State; the other a Marquis. To Manning the whole affair was "infinitely disgusting," yet he had to stand on the rights of his order; so, too, did Lord Salisbury. When the Prince accorded a courtesy precedence to the ecclesiastic, he found an amicable solution for what promised to be a pretty imbroglio. His tact shone no less when he went slumming, wearing a ready-made ulster and a slouch hat, though the private hansom with the cockaded driver which took him to Clerkenwell or the East End, and waited while his indignation was aroused at the miseries of the poor, made his disguise a little transparent.

At the meetings he was punctual, zealous, — "We should not have had a sitting to-day but for his zeal" is an entry by J. E. C. Bodley, the secretary, in his diary, — and liberal. We see him being particularly sympathetic to the Trades-Union and labor witnesses, asking pertinent questions, interested in hygiene and sanitation, learning that in some cases there was only one latrine for sixteen houses and several hundred people. When it was his fellow members' turn to put questions, he might seize the opportunity to get abreast of his private correspondence, for he was an immense letter writer, like all his contemporaries. But he was always alert to take up the threads of the proceedings. If he had no letters to write, he sat listening to the evidence and drawing colored Union Jacks with the red and blue pencils provided for the Commissioners. And sometimes the tedium would be broken by his sense of humor finding expression in hearty,

uncontrollable laughter. “The habits of the Jews are indescribably filthy” was the assertion of a witness that caused the Prince to shake with amusement as he wondered what Ferdy Rothschild would say if the statement were recorded unmodified; or he would cap the badinage at the Commissioner’s table, as when Bodley mischievously suggested that Lord Salisbury, who, veiling flippancy or cynicism under a mock seriousness, was asking minute questions on worm-eaten houses, should be asked to furnish an excursus on the habits of worms to be added as an Appendix to the Report — an observation, said the Prince, that was an example of the worm turning.

The Prince’s humor was never cynical, or he would not have gained the goodwill of Henry Broadhurst, the first “workingman” Member of Parliament, whom he invited to Sandringham, an invitation the M. P. refused because he had no dress suit. The Prince, who said that he fully understood the reason, afterwards got over the difficulty by putting him up at the Village Club — a gesture infinitely to the taste of the class to which Henry Broadhurst belonged. So, with much mutual friendliness, the Commissioners labored and the Prince ultimately signed the Report, which minimized nothing of the evils under review. As is so often the case, however, with Royal Commissions, its recommendations had little effect and this particular legacy of the mid-Victorian era, if its poison has been diluted, is still an inheritance to plague politicians and a sore in the body politic of England. So far as concerned the Prince, he never lost his interest in the problems that he then had investigated. A number of years afterwards we see him devoting afternoons of country-house parties to visiting neighboring workhouses, and as King he showed, one day, during the inspection of some workmen’s dwellings, in the words of a special correspondent, a knowledge of cupboard accommodation which marked him as an expert.

In other matters appertaining to the life of the people the Prince also professed a liberal and reforming zeal, supporting movements which, in more than one case, only came to fruition during his reign. As President of the Society of Arts he pressed Disraeli, during *that statesman's last ministry*, to provide London and other cities with a water supply adequate to their needs, but nearly a quarter of a century elapsed before the London of King Edward VII received a Metropolitan Water Board, and its citizens were able to enjoy a fine summer without the dread of a water famine.

The question of Sunday observance, a matter wherein the British conscience has long believed itself to be singularly perceptive of the Almighty's wishes, also found him a champion of enlightenment. In society, the grim old Sabbath was fighting a losing battle. Churchgoing of a morning had still a fashionable sanction, but Lady Lindsay's Sunday afternoon parties at the Grosvenor Galleries were among the smart affairs of London seasons in the eighties, and Sunday evenings were becoming more and more the vogue for dinner parties — the Prince setting an example in this respect at Marlborough House, though he respected the convention that games of chance or skill should not be begun till the clock had struck twelve.

It seemed hardly fair, if the upper classes condescended to enjoy themselves mildly on Sundays, that the masses should have to choose between the churches or the public houses. The Prince ardently supported the proposal to open the national museums and galleries on Sunday afternoons, a proposal which it took the House of Commons ten years longer than the House of Lords to consider desirable, and which only came into effect during the late nineties, when the Edwardian era had begun to run its course in everything but name.

A nice question of morals which stirred the public opinion of his time found him also on the side of freedom. The

marriage of a man with his deceased wife's sister lay within the degrees prohibited by the Church. But it infringed no natural barrier of consanguinity and inflicted hardship on many humble and conscientious widowers, unable to provide their bereaved children with *stepmothers* whose affinity to their predecessors would be a guarantee for their maternal behavior. When the bill came before the House of Lords in 1879, the Prince presented a petition from over three thousand Norfolk farmers praying for the measure to become law. On this occasion, as on many others, it was defeated by the influence of churchmen who did not remember, if they had ever known, how easy-going the Church was in this matter of the prohibited degrees when it really controlled the morality of Europe. However, the Prince persevered, some years later presenting a similar petition from his friends the London cabbies, to the chagrin of ministers who thought he should not identify himself with any one class, and when he had been five years a king he had the satisfaction of giving his assent to the bill which enabled a widower to marry his sister-in-law.

Patience was a still more exacting master in foreign affairs, where his major interests lay. The Prince, who prided himself upon his quick appreciation of men, believed that he could do much in this sphere if only some initiative were his. More liberal than his mother in domestic politics, not least on the Irish Question, he agreed well enough with her on the underlying principles of a foreign policy flattering to an imperialist pride that Disraeli had created and Rudyard Kipling was to make articulate. He was as angry as the Queen over the death of Gordon, that "ideal leader of half-civilized man" who became the typical hero of a people just grown conscious of the White Man's Burden. Gladstone's weak-kneed attitude in South Africa also excited the forebodings of both mother and son. In what seemed at the time the unimportant matter of Heligoland, he shared the

feelings of the Queen, who agreed to its cession with a shake of the head. "Giving up what one has is always a bad thing," it prompted her to write.

Even the profession of arms was closed to him. When the Guards were ordered to Egypt with the Expedition sent to quell the Arabi Revolt, the Prince was in hopes that he would be allowed to accompany them as their Colonel in Chief. It would have befitted the Heir to the Throne to have thus taken the field with the flower of the British Army, the Household Cavalry, who had been told from the pulpit that, as they were the Queen's Guards on earth, so would they be the Life Guards of Heaven. But the Queen vetoed the proposal; the risk, she thought, would have been too great — the death of the Prince Imperial had impressed her, and the War Office, with the inconvenient dangers that beset warfare against black foes. Towards Lord Wolseley, the Commander in Chief under whom the Prince had wished to serve, his feelings rapidly cooled, and a "quite between ourselves letter" about that soldier's failings, written by the Prince to Sir Henry Ponsonby a few years later, drew from the Queen the opinion that both her son and Lord Wolseley were "rather too extreme in their opinions." "The Queen is sorry," she wrote to her secretary, "for the violence of the Prince of Wales' expressions against Lord Wolseley. She does not think him false. Does Sir Henry?"

Was the Prince an extremist? Or was he an Edwardian for whom the Victorian stage could offer no adequate scope? The basis of the foreign policy which he advocated seemed to have melted away under French irritation at English policy in Egypt, now turning the Valley of the Nile into a British Protectorate in everything but name. France pouted at having missed its opportunity of coöperation in that delectable country and then smiled on Russia, who would insure her against being ravished a second time by Germany. The Prince, for years a Russophobe of the purest

Disraeli school, riposted by toying with the idea that blood was thicker than water, or rather than the vinegar into which the good wine of Anglo-French friendship had turned. He looked across the Rhine, to Germany where Bismarck in his old age appeared to grow more reasonable and where the day approached when power would pass into the hands of the Prince's brother-in-law. On Fritz, that upright and liberal Crown Prince, he felt he could rely, the more surely because he was a good husband who shared the liberal views of his English wife.

But the idea, even as he formulated it, began to wilt. His friend Dilke, like a good Liberal, looked coldly on young German ambitions for a colonial empire which the Prince thought reasonable. Many of the Cabinet, including Chamberlain, shared Dilke's views. Were German professions to be taken at their face value? Did Bismarck, in annexing New Guinea, which produced nothing but a voracious type of cannibal, look to swallowing later on the Dutch Empire in the Far East? The Australians suspected as much. Sir Henry Loch, the Governor of Victoria, wrote to him of the fears that German imperialism was sowing in the Antipodes. Yet, although he knew Bismarck to be an old fox, the Prince was inclined to persevere, prompted by family feeling and his antipathy to the policy of isolation which so nearly led to an anti-British Coalition in the South African War. One thing, however, he did not yet know. He was unaware that his nephew Prince William, then a young man of twenty-five, had a character in which physical exuberance, intellectual curiosity, impenetrable self-confidence, the vague yearnings which popularly pass for mysticism, a profound patriotism, warmth of heart, and an infinite capacity for taking offense made up a complex and dangerous egoism.

The ex-Kaiser enters on the long duel with his uncle in a letter to the Tsar, who happened to be that uncle's brother-

in-law. "The visit of the Prince of Wales," he wrote in the summer of 1884, "has yielded and is still bringing extraordinary fruit which will continue to multiply under the hands of my mother and the Queen of England. But these English have accidentally forgotten that *I* exist."<sup>1</sup> There is unconscious irony in another letter from this young man, thus secretly corresponding with the ruler of another state, which accuses his uncle of having a "false and intriguing nature" and of doing "a little political plotting behind the scenes with the ladies." But the greatest irony of all was that of destiny, which struck down his father after a reign of three months and set him, who understood nothing of the real art of kingship, at the head of the greatest military power in Europe.

Until then, the future Kaiser William II could do little except backbite. In the meantime his not unnatural desire to prevent any *rapprochement* between Great Britain and Russia found him, from different motives, siding with his mother and grandmother against the Prince of Wales. Relations with Russia formed the dominant theme of British foreign policy during the whole of the Victorian era, as in effect they have done during the present century. Like all those who have helped to control our foreign policy during the last hundred years, the Prince allowed the glamour of the great Slav power to color his judgment. He could follow no discreet and middle path, but, in turn attracted and repelled by the Russian enigma, he shifted from one extreme to the other. As a young man we have seen him working for an agreement which Bismarck quashed. Then the Russian advance in Central Asia and the Balkans bred in him a bellicosity shared by the Queen. Now again in the middle eighties, under the influence of Lord Randolph Churchill, he swung to the opposite

<sup>1</sup> The Kaiser's letters of 1884-85 to the Tsar Alexander III have been printed in the Periodical of the Central Archives, Administration of the Russian Soviet Republic.



view. That Tory democrat, — who, thanks to his wife, had become one of the Prince's intimates on the race course as in the study, — after resigning from Lord Salisbury's Ministry in which, after the Prime Minister, he was the most prominent member, became the advocate of friendlier relations with Russia and, much to the Queen's annoyance, carried the Prince of Wales with him.

"Very impulsive and utterly unreliable" was the Queen's judgment of a politician whom she distrusted quite as much as she had Dilke, and her annoyance when he went on a self-appointed mission to St. Petersburg was all the greater for her knowledge that it had her son's full approval. "*Pray don't* correspond with him," she writes, "for he really is not to be trusted and is very indiscreet and his power and talents are greatly overrated." To her, the only way of checking Russian aggressiveness in Central Asia or the Balkans was by remaining on good terms with the Central Powers, and nothing, she knew, would irritate Germany more than the idea that England was trying to come to terms with Russia.

The Prince's sister blew cold upon his zeal in more general and less homely language. "Russia," she wrote, "is never loyal to anyone and therefore it is impossible to keep to written agreements, or to be friendly, though one need not be the reverse. One can only aim at not offending Russia needlessly, never trust or believe her and be always on the *qui vive*" — words that remain as true to-day as when they were written, in 1888. But her brother was not impressed by these arguments and continued henceforth to work for an understanding with Russia which earned him the praise of the Liberals, modified by their distrust of Tsarist absolutism. When in 1894 he returned from the coronation of his nephew, ill-fated Nicholas II, his efforts to establish good relations — he wrote hopefully of an actual alliance between the two great Asiatic Powers — earned for him the thanks of the Premier, Lord Rosebery, who assured him that he had never

stood so high in the national esteem. Yet here again his policy was only to reach its consummation — a precarious consummation, as his sister had foretold — after he had come to the throne. And again by the paradox that in politics so often turns the best-laid schemes awry, the ultimate failure of King Edward's Russian policy may be traced to the Tsaritsa, his best-loved sister Alice's daughter, whose marriage to Tsar Nicholas II he had been the first to approve.

Never since the days of Charlemagne had the sovereigns of Europe formed such a family party. Their houses were united by a thousand interweaving strands of kinship which entranced the genealogists, frightened the eugenists, and seemed to the world at large a solid guarantee of peace. At the centre of this royal nexus stood the Prince of Wales, whose warm affections responded to the joys and sorrows of family life. Death was always busy. When he cut off the Emperor Frederick an incident arose full of menace for the future.

The tragic end of his brother-in-law moved the Prince deeply. "I felt on leaving the church [where the funeral was held] that I had parted from the noblest and best man I had ever known, except my ever-to-be-lamented father." So he wrote to the Queen from Berlin, adding that his "meeting with Vicky was heartrending." Whilst he grieved as a man, he lamented also as a Prince. For he had hoped much from the late Emperor's liberal tendencies, looking forward to the time when Bismarck's policy of blood and iron would give way to conciliation and respect for the feelings of other nations, nursing the dream that somehow his wise brother-in-law would heal the sore of 1871 and restore Alsace and Lorraine to France. Death had now shattered that vision. But he did not cease to turn it over in his mind, and one day during that lugubrious visit he asked Count Herbert Bismarck whether the Emperor Frederick had really cherished this ideal.

It was perhaps indiscreet to question the son on the amends contemplated for his father's brutal act. There were other wrongs which the Prince of Wales had hoped his brother-in-law would right — the seizure of Schleswig, for instance, and the sequestration of the private property belonging to the Hanoverian Guelphs which was Bismarck's punishment on the King of Hanover for joining the losing side in the Austro-Prussian War in 1866. The Prince felt the more keenly about both these questions since they closely concerned his Princess's family — the Duke of Cumberland, head of the dispossessed Hanoverians, being not only his cousin, but also the husband of his wife's sister. Again it was possibly unwise of the Prince of Wales to introduce the subject, especially at a time when his nephew felt grotesquely conscious of his newly acquired dignity. But who shall blame him, or the Princess, for inquiring on matters wherein they were so closely interested? Count Herbert Bismarck was amiable, — too amiable, indeed, — and the Prince, encouraged by his friendliness, which the Count said afterwards was prompted by his desire to be civil to the Princess, committed a more serious diplomatic error. He sent a memo of the conversation to the Count for his confirmation, thus suggesting that their informal conversation had been a more or less formal exchange of views.

Uppermost, however, in his thoughts when he left Berlin were not these matters, but the Kaiser's unfilial treatment of his mother, the Empress Frederick. This made the Prince's heart bleed, and the Queen, sharing her son's uneasiness, decided to intercede with her grandson on her daughter's behalf. A letter to “Dear Willy” from his “very affectionate grandmamma” breathes the very spirit of wise and maternal solicitude. “Mama does *not* know I am writing to you on this subject, nor has she ever mentioned it to me, but after talking it over with Uncle Bertie, he advised me to write direct to you. Let me also ask you to bear with poor Mama

if she is sometimes irritated and excited. She does not mean it so; think what months of agony and suspense . . . she has gone through and *don't mind it.*" She added: "There are many rumours of your going and paying visits to sovereigns. I hope that at least you will let some months pass before anything of the kind takes place as it is not three weeks since poor beloved Papa was taken and we are still in such deep mourning for him."

His grandmother's letter only made the Kaiser more determined to show that his greatness had not been merely thrust upon him, and he replied with a slighting reference to the "stagnation which had set in during the second half of Papa's time," — no epithet called attention to the virtues of his sire, — wrote casually of the "etiquette of Court mournings," used the expression "We Emperors," and said ominously that Uncle Bertie seemed not to have been informed in detail of the facts regarding his mother's wishes as to her future residence, which was one of the points in dispute.

The disgust which both the Queen and the Prince of Wales began to entertain towards the Kaiser was exacerbated by his refusal to consent to the marriage of his sister, Victoria, with Prince Alexander of Teck, — a marriage to which his mother had already agreed, — on the ground of its being a *mésalliance*. Since one of Prince Alexander's brothers was the husband of the Prince of Wales's sister, Princess Beatrice, and the other, Prince Louis, the future British Admiral, had married the Prince of Wales's niece, the thing was an insult. One can smile now at the Kaiser's folly, for this unhappy lady, at the mature age of sixty-one, took as her third husband one Alexander Zoubkoff, described indifferently as a chauffeur or a dancing master. But nobody smiled then, and the Queen felt so sore that she sent a cypher telegram to Lord Salisbury, trusting that "we shall be very cool in our communications with my grandson and Prince Bismarck, who are bent on a return to the oldest times of government."

"How sickening," the Queen writes to the Prince of Wales at the same time, "it is to see Willy, not two months after his beloved and noble father's death going to banquets and reviews."

In this atmosphere of strain the Kaiser proceeded to rap his uncle over the knuckles for his questions to Count Herbert Bismarck. "There are people," he said in a swashbuckling speech, "who have the audacity to maintain that my father was willing to part with what he . . . gained on the battle-field. We, who knew him so well, cannot tolerate even for a single moment such an insult to his memory," and the young fire-eater declared that they would rather sacrifice their eighteen army corps and forty-two millions of inhabitants on the field of battle than surrender a single stone of Alsace and Lorraine.

This was to show Europe, as well as his uncle, that he was a man; next he proceeded more specifically to indicate his superiority to his mother's brother. The Prince of Wales was invited that summer by the Emperor Francis Joseph to follow the Austria-Hungarian manœuvres. He anticipated the visit with pleasure. It promised some excellent shooting with that attractive rake the Crown Prince Rudolph, and he also wanted to thank the Emperor in person for having appointed him a Colonel of Hussars, which meant a gorgeous addition in claret and gold to his fifty-two uniforms. Whilst the Prince was taking a preliminary cure at Homburg, he heard that the Kaiser had invited himself to Vienna, and wrote his nephew a note saying that he looked forward to their meeting in the Austrian capital.

The Kaiser did not answer. But when the Prince reached Vienna he learned from his host that the Kaiser had stipulated with his brother Emperor that no other royal guest should be present in Vienna during his stay. To make the insult more unmistakable, the German Ambassador, Prince Reuss, told his British colleague that the Kaiser refused to

meet his uncle. The Prince of Wales, at a loss to explain his nephew's insolence, inquired of the Crown Prince Rudolph, who confirmed what he had already heard. Still determined to do what he could to avoid a quarrel, he caused his equerry to write to the British Military Attaché in Berlin, then on manœuvres with the Kaiser, saying that the Prince had the intention of meeting the Kaiser at the Vienna station in Prussian uniform. Colonel Swayne, the officer in question, brought the letter to the notice of the All-Highest, whose answer was to cut the British Military Attaché, to whom he had hitherto been most gracious. And Bismarck's hand in this quarrel showed itself when the German papers began to attack the Prince of Wales for his intrigues to alienate Germany and Austria from Russia, in the hope that they would then effect a *rapprochement* with his beloved France.

The Queen warmly took her son's part. When the incident got into the hands of the Chancelleries and Count Herbert Bismarck told Lord Salisbury that the Kaiser resented being treated by his uncle as a nephew instead of an Emperor, the Queen's anger boiled over, and she wrote to her Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary that this was "really too *vulgar* to be believed." "We have always," she said, "been very intimate with our grandson and nephew, and to pretend that he is to be treated in *private* as well as in public as 'His Imperial Majesty' is *perfect madness*." The Prince of Wales, she added, must not submit to such treatment, and she prophetically feared what "such a hot-headed, conceited and wrong headed young man, devoid of all feeling," might do in the future. "If he has such notions he had better *never come here*." She had the whip hand, for the Kaiser wished above everything to be received as Emperor at the oldest court of Europe, and if she had been properly served by her Prime Minister, the Kaiser would have had reason to regret his ill manners.

Lord Salisbury was too indolent, or too cynical, to assist

the Queen in teaching her grandson a lesson. This massive, shabbily dressed, bearded aristocrat, who lumbered through the high places of English political life as he did through St. James's Park in the early hours of the morning on his tri-cycle, had been intended by nature for a chemist and was more interested in the reactions of gases than of men. For him, too, the greatness of England was symbolized rather in the *noblesse oblige* attitude of the old territorial aristocracy than in the dignity and splendor of the Crown. His was the unavowed view which the members of his class have held through the generations of English history, the view that the King, as John's barons made him affirm at Runnymede, is only first amongst his peers, different in degree, but not in kind, from themselves. To Lord Salisbury the blood royal was very well, but also very well was the blood of the Cecils, pure in its three centuries of descent in the male line and refined by the spacious atmosphere of Hatfield. In brief, he was intellectually averse from interfering in this quarrel. Besides, he wanted to cultivate good relations with Bismarck. So he adopted the expedient of looking the trouble straight in the face and then passing on.

The Queen had all the pluck and good sense. When Lord Salisbury flaccidly suggested that the Empress Frederick should postpone her visit, she put her royal foot down. It would be "impossible, heartless and cruel to stop my poor broken-hearted daughter from coming to her mother for peace, protection and comfort." So she telegraphed to Lord Salisbury, and then added, with a wisdom so palpably lacking in the minister who nearly precipitated a war between England and America and actually allowed one to break out in South Africa which scandalized the world, "It would be of no use and would only encourage the Emperor and the Bismarcks against us. You all seem frightened of them which is not the way to make them better."

As regards her daughter, the Queen could brush aside Lord

Salisbury's policy of suffering all things for the promotion of good fellowship. But she could not galvanize her Minister into taking any effective steps to make her grandson answer for his affront to the Prince of Wales. The Kaiser's rudeness had brought mother and son together on terms of affectionate intimacy, and the Queen's authoritarian and maternal instincts were now able to direct themselves towards her eldest son undisturbed by any suspicions of jealousy. She writes saying how much she has enjoyed the two days he has spent with her at Osborne. "William," she adds, "must *not* come *this* year, you could not meet him, and I could not after all he has said and done." Later in the spring she goes to stay with him at Sandringham, her first visit since his illness eighteen years before, being escorted from the station by the members of the hunt in pink, an attention that pleased her immensely, and enjoying the rare pleasure of theatricals in which played Henry Irving, "a mannerist like Macready," and Ellen Terry, whom the Queen contented herself with describing as "a handsome woman."

But it was one thing to make this gesture to her eldest son, who was so kind and considerate; it was another to fight against her Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, backed by the British Ambassador in Berlin, Sir Edward Malet, who had fallen an easy victim to the Kaiser's charm of manner and believed "H. Bismarck's lies" about the now famous interview. When towards the end of February she grudgingly told Lord Salisbury that she would receive the Emperor, stipulating that "he must make some sort of apology to the Prince of Wales first," the Prime Minister at once telegraphed in warm tones to Berlin an invitation to the Kaiser to visit the Queen at Osborne.

The long sequel showed how ill advised was that action in its condonation of the German Emperor's conduct towards the future King of Great Britain. But Lord Salisbury continued to misread the Kaiser's character, declaring to the



Queen early in March that it was probable he had "now thoroughly awakened from temporary intoxication of last summer," saying that it was in Her Majesty's interest to make his penitential return as easy to him as possible. In point of fact, the Kaiser was not in the least penitent. To Sir Edward Malet he explained his treatment of his mother by the "good stubborn English blood" that both had in their veins; about the Vienna incident he said nothing. The Prince of Wales had at least as much of that same good stubborn blood. Yet, though he was the aggrieved party, he decided to take the first step towards a reconciliation with his nephew, and he deputed his brother-in-law, Prince Christian, to try to act as peacemaker, a rôle that might be the easier for him since he was the Kaiser's uncle by marriage. To Prince Christian in Berlin, therefore, the Prince of Wales wrote a letter, setting out the facts of the case. "It takes two to make a quarrel," he concluded, "and as I have never had one with William in my life I think I have every reason to complain of the treatment which I received," and he said that unless his nephew wrote to express his regret, he would be obliged to absent himself during the Kaiser's visit, which would obviously have deplorable results.

Not only could Count Herbert Bismarck tell lies. The Kaiser, thus directly approached, showed that he was as adept as his Foreign Minister. He brazenly declared it to be an invention that he did not wish to see the Prince of Wales in Vienna and he could not, therefore, apologize for something that he had never done. The fault, if fault there was, must be sought in Viennese diplomatic channels. When the Prince of Wales received a telegram from Prince Christian to this effect, he professed, as well he might, to be mystified, but maintained his ground that the easiest course would be for the Kaiser to write regretting the misunderstanding by which the uncle had been under the impression that his presence in Vienna was distasteful to his nephew.

Prince Christian, imbued with the common fear of the All-Highest, was afraid to show this second letter to his imperial nephew. The Queen thought the Kaiser's explanation had "aggravated, rather than modified, the situation," and when Lord Salisbury's complaisance enabled Count Herbert Bismarck to assure Prince Christian that the tone of the invitation left no doubt of the Queen being satisfied, she declared that she had never been satisfied, but on the contrary had been "extremely dissatisfied throughout." It made the matter worse, as her private secretary observed, since "it accused the Prince of Wales in a sort of way of inventing the Vienna story." The Queen was all for thrashing it out and seeing what Prince Reuss would have to say of his share in the business. It might mean a breach between the Kaiser and the Bismarcks, in which there would be nothing to deplore. In any case Prussians understood only rough handling. But Lord Salisbury protested on the ground of high policy, and the affair had perforce to rest. "The Prince of Wales," wrote Lord Knollys, "is sacrificed to political expediency and no one who has the power has the nerve to insist on proper reparation being granted him." It was a "miserable termination," full of future trouble, and though a specious reconciliation brought together uncle and nephew, the Kaiser hardly troubled to hide his contempt for the Prince of Wales, and the Prince could not disguise his antipathy to so rude a nephew.

## XII

### BACCARAT!

THERE could be no doubt of the Prince's gift in social leadership. This virtuoso of conduct was always setting fashions, whether it was the shape of a collar, a mere trick of speech such as calling champagne "boy," or the week-end habit which has transformed the countryside of Southern England. His very slips, like Liszt's wrong notes, only emphasized his essential rightness. People of course grumbled, some thinking him not strict enough, whilst others thought him too strict. His rigid ideas on the respect due to the vocation once caused him to give King Kalakaua of the Sandwich Isles precedence over his brother-in-law, the German Crown Prince. The occasion was a party in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Fritz protested, but the Prince stood firm. "Either the brute," he said, "is a King or else he is an ordinary black nigger — and if he is not a King, why is he here at all?" There was no answer to such logic. Safe in his own personal dignity, which never failed to serve him, he made his friends where he pleased. Mr. Gladstone thought many of them deplorable, but did not allow his feelings to interfere with the respectful affection he felt for the heir to the throne. His own sister declared he saw "*too much of the same people*" and rejoiced when a fresh and uncankered rose seemed to take his fancy. With all this it was undeniable that he led, and undeniable that fair Americans and clever Jews, the "ortolan brigade" assimilating everything English except the letter *r*, were making London society into a more varied and richer synthesis.

He had been the leader now for close on thirty years; long

enough for a generation to arise which could remember no time when there was not a Prince of Wales in Marlborough House, and long enough too for ladies whom the Prince had admired to be marrying off their daughters — a sure sign, this, of the passing years. Many did not approve of the freedom, or laxity, which had been introduced under his auspices. The Queen, seeing how common divorce was growing, wished to intervene. "Society is too bad *now*," she wrote, "some stop must be put to it." But this British counterpart of Augustus could do no more than refuse to receive at Court the guilty parties in such suits, a clumsy enough weapon with which to scarify incontinence amongst the upper classes.

There was also another vice that needed castigation. The civilizing influences shed by women as they struggled towards a legal and moral equality had diminished the old habits of winebibbing, without really putting an end to the masculine predominance in society. Man was a more sober but not a less selfish creature than before, still thinking first of his own amusement, occupying his days in sport, and substituting for the intoxication of the bottle the excitement of the card table. Gambling had grown so much the fashion that young men had almost forgotten how to dance, and it was no uncommon thing, even at ducal balls, to see young women, in default of male partners, dancing with one another. The moralists were lamenting that progress towards temperance in drink was thus offset by backsliding towards intemperance in play, when a scandal occurred which enabled them to train their artillery on the Prince of Wales.

Circumstances connected with the Tranby Croft Baccarat Case make it more discreditable to the good feeling, or, what is perhaps worse, the good sense, of the parties concerned than the usual run of such cases, little apt as they are to show human nature in a pleasant light. If the novelists and playwrights who hold the mirror up to life are to be believed, it is

essential that the cheat shall be caught *in flagrante delicto*. Suspicion, of course, has been previously aroused, and suspicion has led to joint observation. But denunciation at the table is held to be a dramatic and necessary corollary of the evidence which the offender has given of his wrongdoing. There follows the denial, and then the confession of the cheat, who, after signing a paper promising never to touch a card again, withdraws forever from association with polite humankind. In Sir William Gordon-Cumming's case, the only thing true to type was the signing of a paper. For the rest the events which led the Prince into serious trouble and socially ruined a wealthy Scots baronet, the Prince's friend and a Lieutenant Colonel of the Scots Guards, form an odd and almost incredible story.

Some of the house party which had assembled for the Doncaster Race week of 1890 at Tranby Croft, the country seat of Mr. Arthur Wilson, a solid Yorkshire shipowner, sat down late one evening to play baccarat. The suggestion was thrown out at random and the table had to be improvised by placing three whist tables together, their unequal height making it somewhat difficult to see the stakes of the players. The game had not been long in progress when, as the Prince held the bank, Mr. A. S. Wilson, the twenty-two-year-old son of the house, saw his neighbor, Sir William Gordon-Cumming, surreptitiously adding to, or subtracting from, his stake, after the banker had shown his cards. On the other side of this young man sat a Mr. Berkeley Levett, one of Sir William Gordon-Cumming's junior officers. To him Mr. Wilson expressed his astonishment.

"By God, Levett, this is too hot," he said.

"What on earth do you mean?" the other asked.

"Why, this man next to me is cheating."

"My dear fellow, you must have made some mistake."

"Well, just look for yourself," said Wilson in the discreet *sotto voce* with which this conversation had been carried on.

Berkeley Levett did as he was told, whilst the game proceeded merrily for an hour and a half without any of the elder, and presumably more experienced, players seeing or suspecting anything, although the Prince of Wales did say to Gordon-Cumming: "I wish you would put your stakes where they can be seen" — a rebuke which might be explained by the unsuitableness of the tables.

When the party broke up, Wilson accompanied Berkeley Levett to his room, where the subaltern threw himself on the bed and ejaculated: "It is too hot." Then he became more articulate. "My God," he said, "to think of it! Lieutenant Colonel Gordon-Cumming, Baronet, to be caught cheating at cards! For God's sake don't ask me what is to be done."

Mrs. Wilson, whom her son told the same night, expressed herself in not very dissimilar terms. "For God's sake," she said, "don't let us have any scandal here." But she did not pass on the information to her husband, who objected to baccarat being played by the young; and sleep, we may presume, soon visited the pillows alike of the just and the unjust who lay that night in Tranby Croft.

The next morning the youthful protagonist in this social drama did two things. He told his brother-in-law, Mr. Lycett Green, a young and robust-minded M. F. H., who in turn told his wife, and he arranged with his mother to have a proper table for the game that evening. When they sat down to play, there were thus five of the party whom he had put on the alert, four of them being members of his own family. None of the other players, including of course the Prince, were aware of the suspicions harbored by the Wilson family against one of their guests. To them it was just a pleasant game to fill the interval between after-dinner conversation, with its concomitant of drawing-room music, and bedtime.

On this occasion Lycett Green first detected Sir William

Gordon-Cumming cheating. The chalk line over which the stakes were to be put had been marked by the Prince himself, and now Lycett Green saw Gordon-Cumming engaged in what the French called *la poussette*, so common and so easy was this method of cheating the bank at baccarat known to be; in other words, Gordon-Cumming pushed a £10 counter over the white line after the banker, who again was the Prince of Wales, had turned up his card. This at least is what the young man alleged. The sight struck him with horror, and his first impulse was to jump up and denounce the cheat. But the thought of the ladies' feelings made him scribble a note to his mother-in-law instead. Then he got up from the table to calm his ruffled spirit — until the lure of baccarat brought him back to share in the play, which ended, like the night before, in apparent amity.

If the other members of the Wilson family had also had their suspicions confirmed, Berkeley Levett on the second evening noticed nothing, for the good reason that, not wanting to be mixed up in a scandal, he refused to look in his Colonel's direction. But in any case no one's demeanor indicated that trouble was brewing, and when Sir William Gordon-Cumming suggested the next morning to his hostess, whose brother had died suddenly, that he should curtail his visit, Mrs. Wilson pressed him to stay. And all the party, including the baccarat players, went off for another day at the Doncaster Races.

On their return the storm gathered. Mr. Lycett Green, acting on the advice of Lord Edward Somerset, who was considered a man of the world, submitted the matter to Lord Coventry, the member of the house party whose experience made him best fitted to deal with the situation. Lord Coventry took, as an additional adjudicator, General Owen Williams, an old friend of the suspected cheat's. These two saw the three male witnesses for the prosecution, they heard young Mr. Wilson's story and his brother-in-law's, and the

corroborative evidence of Mr. Berkeley Levett. When they had done this it was time to dress for dinner. And the score or so of guests reassembled for the last time in good fellowship round the hospitable board of Tranby Croft.

Lord Coventry and General Owen Williams realized that a serious scandal threatened — a scandal which, in the light of the social canons of the time and the necessity of keeping the Prince's name unsmirched, must be hushed up. One cannot tell what course would have been followed by Lord Hartington, who once wondered in his aloof way why cases of cheating in the clubs seemed always to be referred to him; but to judge by the fruits of their efforts, Lord Coventry and General Williams were assuredly not wise in their generation. They had both played on each night. Neither had seen anything. No suspicions, so far as they knew, had ever previously been entertained against the honor of Sir William Gordon-Cumming, who was known in Paris, as well as in London, to play high. The primary witness, Mr. A. S. Wilson, was little more than a boy. The others, it might be argued, had yielded to suggestion — a hypothesis the more reasonable from the fact that all three were young and two were certainly impulsive. In any case, even supposing Lord Coventry and General Williams considered that it was not too late to investigate a charge which ought to have been made at the time the offense was committed, they should then and there have confronted Sir William Gordon-Cumming with his traducers — the course which Mr. Lycett Green wished to follow.

Instead, they decided without further ado that Gordon-Cumming was guilty, and after dinner submitted the matter to the Prince of Wales. He also handled the situation with something less than his usual adroitness. The wise and obvious attitude for him to have taken, made easier by the fact that on each night he was the loser, would have been to say, "Gordon-Cumming is my friend. Any accusation



made against him is made against me," and to have left the house next morning — a course the more natural to follow since Gordon-Cumming had been invited to Tranby Croft as his friend and at his request. By adopting this attitude he would at least have dissociated himself from any scandal that might have occurred, the more readily since, as with the majority of the players, no idea of any foul play had crossed his mind. But in this case the Prince's common sense was crossed by a strain of suspicion that overcame his usual magnanimity, and the fact that Lord Coventry and General Owen Williams had already made up their minds strengthened the tendency common to our fallible human nature to believe that *les absents ont toujours tort*. So he listened to what the pair told him, heard the three witnesses, and believed their story before listening to anything that Gordon-Cumming might have to say.

In the meantime, the couple of self-constituted judges had gone to Gordon-Cumming and informed him of the very unpleasant accusations brought against him, making it clear at the same time that they considered them to be well founded. He was indignant in his denial, and asked to see the Prince of Wales, though he made no demand to meet his traducers face to face — the obvious thing for an innocent man to have done. The Prince gave him cold comfort, his protestations only eliciting the remark that there were five witnesses against him. Thereupon Gordon-Cumming agreed to the solution proposed by the two wiseacres. He should give a written promise that he would never touch a card again, in return for which the participants in the game who were cognizant of the facts would promise with equal solemnity never to divulge what had occurred. In this way the cheat's social position would be saved, open scandal would be avoided, and the affair would go no further than the billiard room at Tranby Court, where the investigations had been carried on. Gordon-Cumming observed that

to sign such a document would be tantamount to a confession of guilt, — a point which had little weight with Lord Coventry and the General, who already thought him guilty, — but he signed it nevertheless. The signatures of those privy to the case were also appended to the document — the Prince's heading the list. So ended the first phase of the case, Sir William Gordon-Cumming not being pressed to stay when he left the next morning.

The affair so far had been managed with a discretion that left all the other members of the party — including Lady Londonderry, who had been one of the players, the knowledgeable and very solemn Mr. Christopher Sykes, the Prince's equerry, and even the master of the house himself — ignorant that anything untoward had occurred. But if Lord Coventry and General Owen Williams believed that they had thus simply settled a delicate case, they were much mistaken. A secret that is known to eight persons is not likely to remain one long. The Prince of Wales himself was not the kind of man to put his finger to his lips — an attitude that consorted ill with his temperament. And Mrs. Wilson had enemies, women jealous of her success, who were only too ready to take the opportunity of undermining the position to which she had climbed in society. One great lady in particular was known to bear her no good will, and rumor related that the affair became public property through this personage. In vain Sir William Gordon-Cumming cried that the joint undertaking was not being respected by his co-signatories; in vain General Owen Williams wrote to his "dear Bill" assuring him that they were all as mute as the grave. There was no blinking the fact that everyone began to know that Gordon-Cumming had cheated at cards. Some said at Newmarket, some elsewhere, but cheated he had, and the whispers grew so insistent that in a few months it became incumbent on him, if he wished to maintain his honor as an officer and a gentleman,

to bring an action for slander against the members of the Wilson family.

The very thing had happened which Lord Coventry and General Owen Williams wished most to avoid. Instead of hushing up a scandal and shielding the Prince, their blundering efforts had involved him quite unnecessarily in a case which appeared the more squalid the more it was known. The Prince's conduct was blamed on all sides. Middle-class opinion, shuddering at the very name of *baccarat*, sinister and foreign word, was exasperated at the Prince of Wales carrying his own counters about with him, and not in the least mollified to learn that these necessary adjuncts of every round game were the present of Mr. Reuben Sassoon, one of the Oriental Jews whose intimacy with the Prince was exciting the jealousy of his German brethren. Loyal subjects who held conservative views on gambling regretted that the heir to the throne should have been staying in a house where the members of the family had so little sense of decorum as to play with a guest whom they already suspected of cheating, apart altogether from the gross impropriety of allowing their illustrious visitor to be implicated in the sordid atmosphere of card sharpening. Pundits learned in the Queen's Regulations observed that both the Prince of Wales and the General had erred against them in condoning an offense it was not in their power to condone. And the Queen, it was averred, felt pained that her son should believe that an officer in her Guards had cheated at cards, say nothing, and content himself with a written promise that the offender would sin no more.

It was a *cause célèbre*, a nice titbit for the London season of 1891 when spirits were depressed by bad times and a nasty epidemic of summer influenza, keeping attention on tenterhooks for a whole week of early June while the legal giants, Sir Edward Clarke and Sir Charles Russell, who led on either side, fought out the case before Lord Coleridge,

the Lord Chief Justice of England. With Sir Charles Russell for the defendants was another counsel, H. H. Asquith, Q. C., destined one day to be the Prime Minister of the future King, who followed the proceedings on the bench, an interested but impassive spectator, sitting beside Lady Coleridge.

He listened to some hard words, perhaps the hardest in his life. He heard Sir Edward Clarke declare that the suit should make it impossible for Sir William Gordon-Cumming's name to be removed from the Army List whilst those of Field Marshal the Prince of Wales and General Owen Williams remained — bold language to be used by counsel who was also the Solicitor-General. But nothing in the Prince's expression showed that the uncourtier-like thrust had gone home. He listened to a scarifying cross-examination of Mrs. Wilson, and indeed in all the six days there was little pleasant for his ears. Lord Coleridge was more of a courtier, suavely suggesting, when the Prince was called to give evidence, "Perhaps it would be more convenient if Your Royal Highness's chair were moved nearer to the witness box." Perhaps a certain royal insensitiveness helped him to suppress any sign of feeling, though beneath his bland, calm demeanor as a witness the jury saw the Prince's conviction of the guilt of his former friend — a belief untinged by pity or regret. And when in the evening a well-known beauty, who was his neighbor at dinner, unthinkingly asked what he had been doing, he replied: "I have spent the day in Her Majesty's Courts of Justice. It was extremely hot and I am very tired."

The case, indeed, offered interest to everybody. It was a godsend to the moralists in the light it threw on the wickedness of the fast set in particular and of gambling in general, and with their chagrin mingled the pleasurable hope that it would prove the deathblow to the dreaded baccarat. The clubs canvassed the rights and the wrongs of the matter

according to the ethics of the card table, whilst ladies dwelt upon the strain of romance in this grim social drama, and wondered whether Sir William's fiancée was not showing too fine a sense of chivalry in her determination to lead him to the altar whatever the jury's verdict might be. This went against him largely because he had signed the much-canvassed paper. He had said at the time that it was tantamount to a confession of guilt, and now he protested in vain that his action had been determined by the desire to shield the Prince of Wales. In his summing-up Lord Coleridge declared that loyalty could step as far as life, but not so far as dishonor, the view taken by the twelve plain men, who shared the judge's wish to keep the country's institutions "sacred and respectable." And though a number of sympathizers continued to believe in Sir William Gordon-Cumming's innocence, his disappearance from society excited no widespread regrets.

Attention rather focused itself on the Prince of Wales, and directly the trial was over, the floodgates of criticism opened upon him. His conduct was attacked from all sides. The *Times*, in some effective claptrap, profoundly regretted that the Prince should have been mixed up "not only in the case, but in the social circumstances that prepared the way for it." What does concern and distress the public, it said, is that the Prince of Wales should have been at the baccarat table, that the game was apparently played to please him, that it was played with his counters specially taken down for the purpose, that his "set" are a gambling, baccarat-playing set. And in conclusion it "almost wished for the sake of English society" that the Prince would follow the example forced on Sir William Gordon-Cumming and sign a declaration that he would never touch a card again. The Nonconformist conscience, profoundly stirred by the wickedness of baccarat, found spokesmen on platforms and in pulpits. One of the most eminent Wesleyan divines, the

Reverend Hugh Price Hughes, who probably had the vaguest idea how baccarat was played, said, at Exeter Hall, that it was a matter of the most bitter regret for the heir to the throne to be given to one of the worst forms of gambling. Another equally eminent Baptist prayed that the Prince would renounce gambling habits. The sturdy "Wee Frees" cut his name out of their prayers altogether. When he went to open a Hall in Camberwell, he was met with a banner inscribed:—

WELCOME TO OUR PRINCE  
BUT NO GAMBLING

The thing was also turned into a political stunt, and the Secretary of State for War, in answer to a question in the House regarding the Prince's breach of the Queen's Regulations, had to admit on behalf of the Prince that he had been guilty of an error of judgment. Criticism and disapproval came even from over the seas. The spruce oak which the Prince had planted in Central Park was hung one day with a blue tin sign on which was written in bold white letters the single word "Baccarat," although the New York papers protested patriotically that not England but the U. S. A. had produced some of the greatest gamblers the world had ever known. And the Kaiser further endeared himself to his uncle of Wales by writing to express his displeasure that anyone "holding the position of Colonel in the Prussian Hussars should embroil himself in a gambling squabble and play with men young enough to be his sons."

But the voice of the Church had not yet spoken. The clatter had been going on for two months and the Anglican Pope still remained silent. Archbishop Benson was a man of pious and earnest emotions who abhorred iniquity and lamented the sins of society. Like Savonarola, he longed to convert Dives, and eagerly supported the scheme of a titled lady to take a step towards that end by holding a

mission at Lambeth which should bring her sisters of the smart set, whose stronghold lay in Marlborough House, to a sense of the wickedness that surrounded them. The idea proved popular, and the Lambeth penitents, if they did not make Mayfair more spiritual, gave an unwonted air of fashion to the archiepiscopal chapel. The Princess of Wales received an invitation to join in this religious movement, but before accepting prudently asked the Queen, who condemned the proceedings out of hand as sacerdotal. Clearly the Archbishop must have reacted acutely to the Tranby Croft case. He had, however, kept his feelings to himself, and the Prince was therefore able, after being for some weeks the scapegoat for the sins of a gambling people, to send for the Primate, who, whatever his views, had at least not expressed them.

So noxious is the hypocrisy in which the attitude of a section of the English people has enveloped the subject, that one wishes the Prince might for the moment have forgotten the obligations of his position and pointed out to the emotional ecclesiastic that a people in which the gambling spirit, the spirit to take risks, is dead is itself moribund. He could have argued that the desire to back one's luck and cunning, the belief that they will be better than that of others, is at the very root of progress, and indeed of life. What is Christianity itself but a religion extolling the necessity of taking enormous risks in the hope of ultimate gain? The Prince might have drawn examples from biology and natural science, or from the standpoint of ethics he might have quoted the unimpeachable Lecky to the effect that the gaming table was actually a moral agent in the demand it made on nerve and judgment and in the lesson it taught of bearing losses with equanimity.

A Prince, however, must eschew anything that suggests paradox, and he contented himself with saying that he saw no harm in betting and would never try to put down a

national instinct that moved even the grocer's boy to have his sixpence on the Derby. As to playing cards for money, one of the first men with whom he had ever staked half a crown on the rubber was Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, known in his diocese of Oxford as "Soapy Sam" — "at which," says the Archbishop's son, "I imagine both smiled." He had begun the conversation on an angrier note, professing to believe that the Archbishop had instigated the attacks against him — an opening he probably adopted to enable him to have the advantage of the attack rather than from any conviction of its truth. If the Prince's avowal of the harmlessness of betting, coupled indeed with an expression of his abhorrence of gambling which amounted to no more than a plea for the Greek virtue of moderation, did not convince the Archbishop, a man of unyielding middle-class morality, he was ready to agree with the Prince's complaint that his conduct had been misrepresented and misunderstood. And the affair passed out of actuality with an amicable interchange of letters between the future Governor of the Church of England and its actual ecclesiastical head, in which each fired harmlessly over the other. To the Archbishop the Prince made no promise of future amendment. But to the Queen he gave his word that he would never again play baccarat, or suffer it to be played in his presence — an undertaking which caused less self-abnegation since bridge soon arrived to give the outlet to personal initiative and the power to coax Fortune denied by whist.



## XIII

### FIN DE SIÈCLE

TRANBY CROFT and the Cleveland Street scandal, darkly implicating, much to the Prince's disgust, some highborn men of fashion in the practice of the Roman vice, came at the beginning of a decade which had the conviction of Oscar Wilde for its most spectacular social tragedy. The horrid image presented itself to frightened critics of the nineteenth century, hoary and wrinkled, its hypersensitive artists flirting with sin like wicked old debauchees and professing to find no more in the adventure of life than a series of uncoordinated sensations. When these had been experienced, when Salome had kissed the dead Baptist's mouth, when the absinthe had been drunk and the jaded flesh ceased to twitch under the lash of pleasure, there remained nothing except socialism, or an infinite ennui.

I was not sorrowful but only tired  
Of everything that ever I desired.

The Prince of Wales must have smiled if Ernest Dowson's couplet ever came under his eye. Socialism he despised as a patent medicine, and neither by duty nor by inclination was he an æsthete. He had glanced into Swinburne, a literary parent of the *fin-de-siècle* decadents, because he wanted to know about the little man's republicanism; but he had done so by an open window, to counteract, as he declared, his hothouse style. So far as concerned contemporary letters, Marie Corelli, perhaps, seemed to him to possess the readiest knack of making the living spring gush from the hard rock of art. "Out of small things what

wonders arise," he said playfully one evening at Homburg as he took her hand in his and called the attention of his other guests to the disparity between the instrument and the message it transcribed. The literary taste which made his great-uncle George IV a Jane Austen lover had not come to him.

Yet, for all that, the Prince drank more freely at the fount of the waters than many of the professed votaries of decadence whose Bible was the *Yellow Book*. Montmartre was its Pisgah, the Moulin Rouge its temple. That famous shrine of the Muses had just begun to add to the austere vicious gayety of an age "which did not go to see naked girls or niggers." Its patrons, and the Prince was amongst them, came to be refreshed by wit and to savor the Parisian badinage which flourished there in its ultimate perfection. Montmartre in those days lay beyond the orbit of the mass-production tourist, who would have understood neither its physical reticence nor its verbal license. To the free-tongued women who encased themselves in citadels of lace and billowy silk petticoats that made rustling music for sensual ears, dress was a fortification; each rampart had to be stormed in turn, and the final surrender was all the more valued for the siege that had preceded it.

At the Moulin Rouge, Yvette Guilbert used to sing her songs, and there also the famous La Goulue with infinite excitement used to dance the *chahut*, a "quadrille in delirium," whilst the ghastly features of Toulouse-Lautrec remained immobile, yet intent, as he watched the fair, thin figure, now flicking off her partner's top hat with a touch of her toe, now standing on one leg and holding the other high in the air, a monstrous stalk, white above the black stockings and growing out of incredible folds of lace—sixty yards of it, they said, was sewn to her black petticoat. Her only concession to the groundlings was the heart embroidered on the seat of what were then called drawers,

garments that now, as cami-knickers, have become unromantically utilitarian articles of attire.

A strange creature, who led a pet goat about Montmartre and denied the love that the short-legged and long-bodied La Môme Fromage shouted aloud she bore for her. One Grand Prix night they were dancing together at the Jardin de Paris. Suddenly La Goulue espied the Prince and paused with one black leg making the *port d'armes*. Beneath her square-cut fringe this curious woman looked out on the vicious world in which she moved with the expression of a milkmaid. "Allo there, Wales!" she yelled with impudent tongue and ingenuous face. "Are you going to pay for my champagne?" The effrontery of her *tutoiement* amused the Prince, and she had her champagne as the reward of her indiscretion.

His familiarity with the mountain and its people caused him to smile at the well-meant discretion of Mrs. Ogden Goelet, who sent for Yvette Guilbert to sing to the Prince at Cannes, but stipulated that the programme should not go beyond the *jeune fille* songs she interpreted so virginally, for otherwise royal ears might be shocked. The Prince won Yvette's heart as he shook her black-gloved hand. "Quelle distinction, mademoiselle," he said, looking at her white satin dress, "celà vaut une célébrité."

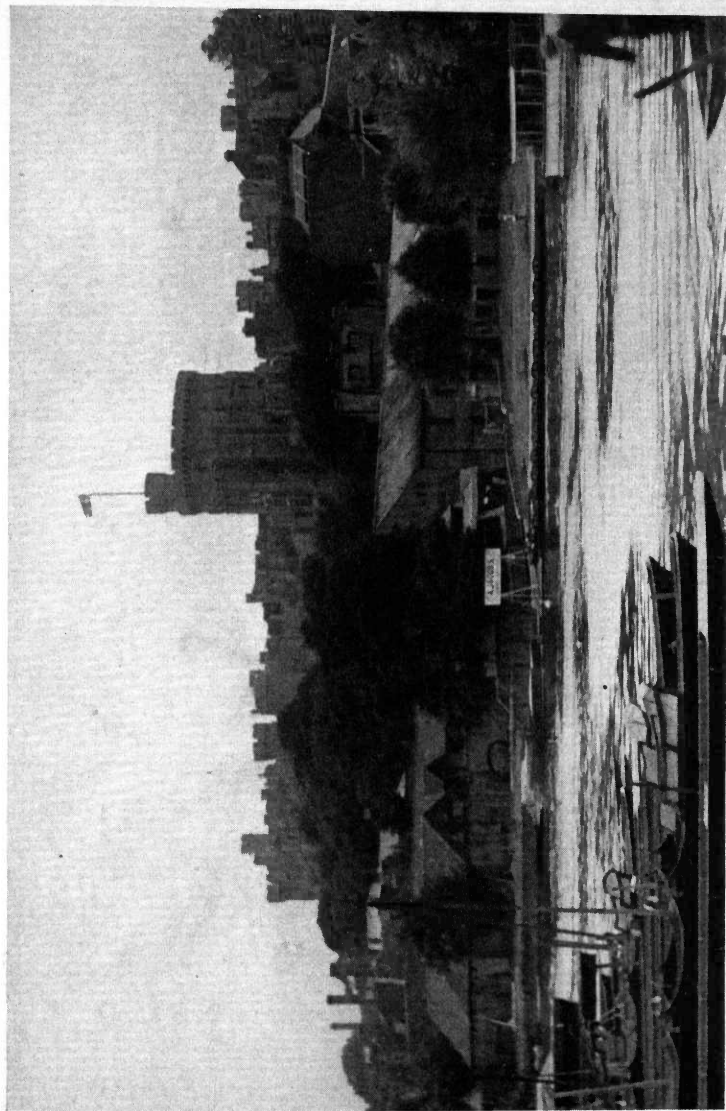
Her singing naturally delighted him. But where were the Parisian songs, where "L'Apache," where "Le Fiacre"? She explained her difficulty. Mrs. Goelet had been urgent . . . only *jeune fille* songs . . . nothing *risqué*. . . . The Prince laughed as he heard of his hostess's forethought; with her permission the ban was raised, and they had "Le Fiacre" whilst the Prince leaned over the piano, the picture of attention.

Afterwards they talked. She told him she was coming to the Empire, to which George Edwardes had given something of a European reputation. "A first-rate house," he said,

"paying 14 per cent to its shareholders." Yvette Guilbert, with the artist's contempt for dividends, asked how a Prince could trouble himself about money. "It is necessary to have a lot in order to be able to lose it," he declared, by which she understood that the tables had been unkind to him, in spite of the systems that he affected or that his friends tried for him.

He did not see her at the Empire. But he arranged for his friend, Arthur Sullivan, to give a party of welcome. To this went the old Duke of Cambridge, who knew an ankle when he saw one, the Duke of Connaught, and, of course, the Prince of Wales. At dinner the star of the evening found herself next to the Austrian Ambassador. Under his breath he whispered with a sidelong glance at the Prince: "He does n't care for art . . . hobnobs with monied people . . . goes about with rich Americans. . . . La Goulue *tutoies* him." Considering the character of his own Crown Prince Rudolph, the Ambassador's remarks showed bad blood rather than good sense, and when at that very moment the Prince turned in their direction and the diplomat melted into compliments, Yvette felt astonishment at his duplicity. But the royal guests were there to banish care, not to seek it, and later in the evening she records how the Prince and his brother, the Duke, fascinated by a whistler then enjoying a vogue on the halls, began to whistle in concert — a strange and for her unforgettable scene.

She sang her songs, too, at Marlborough House, when Princess Alexandra, stiffly gracious, praised her "*grande dame* way of saying *risqué* things," — a compliment, this, for the ex-Parisian seamstress. But Yvette was disappointed that she received no flowers, no souvenir of a feeless evening. Later, when she was performing to the Prince somewhere abroad, she told him of her chagrin, to receive the reply: "When husbands are spendthrifts, wives are economical."



WINDSOR CASTLE

*Elliott & Fry, Ltd.*



Unquestionably the Prince was *fin*. . . . Money was always a difficulty. Spendthrift or not, the position of "first gentleman of Europe" could not be maintained on £150,000 a year, an income that would have seemed something like poverty to their Graces of Westminster, or Portland, or Bedford. Artistes he commanded for nothing. But he had to pay through the nose for the luxuries, great and small, that are the necessities of princes. Some tradesmen were frank enough to admit it.

"Peaches are scarce," said the Prince as he observed on the bill that he had been charged a pound each for them.

"The scarcity, monseigneur, lies in Princes, not in peaches," replied the quick-witted Parisian *restaurateur*, whereat there was nothing to do but laugh and pay.

It irked him that people should discuss his money affairs, though he had friends in whom he could confide. He got used to the report that the Queen had paid his debts, and he must have smiled when the *New York Tribune* declared he owed £640,000 or four times the indebtedness of his immediate predecessor at his most involved period, a story that had been hashed up a score of times in as many years. But when, on his visits to Paris, money lenders, offering to oblige, besieged the Hotel Bristol, and Fuchs and Schwartz, the Viennese house whose dealings with royalty had given them a highly developed technique, paid ladies of rank and beauty large sums to try to secure him as a client, it was time to protest. Fortunately, in 1891, the Prince's luck on the Turf began to change. Thenceforth one of his most expensive pursuits became a source of profit, bringing in over half a million during the remaining years of his life.

The Sandringham colts and fillies, at any rate, knew nothing of the century-end decadence which caused its votaries to sharpen the æsthetic sensibilities to a razor edge that plain men thought was intended to shear through the moral code. Men who tried to achieve perfection by living

up to their blue china inspired fear, and Walter Pater, most exquisite of Victorian men of letters, as secure in conduct as he was sensuous in style, whose writings are a pæan to Platonic chastity, had made many shiver by enunciating the proposition that a color sense was more important to the development of the individual than a sense of right and wrong. All this was surely death, a return to the wickednesses of a pagan world. Yet at the very time when voluptuaries, turning these philosophies to their own base uses, seemed likely to reinfect Europe with the moral poisons of old Rome, a breath of new life from America reached England, the first hint of the neo-Georgian summer for which the Edwardian era was but a verdant springtime. A song, in the nonsense of its words and the blatancy of its duple rhythm foreshadowing "jazz," emerged from the stews of New Orleans and swept England off its feet. "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay," which errand boys whistled, grave men hummed, and was at home everywhere, may stand in history as the threnody of Victorianism and the *aubade* to the care-free, pleasure-loving democracy that was to remake England in its own likeness.

Though in 1891 rumor again suggested that the Queen was about to abdicate, nothing came of it, and the Prince, now in his fifties, still waited to fulfill the vocation for which he had been born. He had reached the age when perfect freedom becomes to many the most objectionable form of slavery. Youth lay far behind. His beard was growing gray; his head, in spite of the lotion applied twice daily, showed a Cæsarian baldness. He had started to descend the hill. Already a bronchitic tendency indicated that his expectation of life could be none too long. Amidst the gushing loyalties evoked by the Diamond Jubilee, Gladstone, now in the extremity of old age, pitied the poor Prince, nearing sixty and not yet a King. His sympathy



was tinged, one may guess, by a personal disappointment that he would not live to see his prediction fulfilled that the throne would suffer no injury whilst it was occupied by King Albert Edward.

Some detected in those early years of the nineties a weakening of grip, a failure to wear the trappings with quite the same enjoyment, something of a *fin-de-siècle* ennui, as if his never-ending minority were beginning to sap his vitality. Yet the facts hardly bear it out. During the Tranby Croft case he may have suffered from a temporary depression; his behavior at public functions certainly lacked his habitual high spirits. It was said how, at a levee, he had a "hump on the back," and his melancholy air at a state concert stands on record — though this may have been due to purely musical causes. He had much to put up with. Some people made a fuss because he did not go to the Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace — and how could a man trained on Verdi enjoy that Gargantuan music-making from five thousand throats? Others complained that as an army officer on the active list he had no right to wear a beard, particularly as the Queen disliked unrazored cheeks — and he was proud of his beard. When he left his native shores for his annual cure, the Kaiser's shadow had fallen across the waters of Homburg, where the loyalty of Americans, too, was as difficult to bear as the criticism of his future subjects. With a strategy worthy of the bold Marlborough, he rushed to Carlsbad in far-off Bohemia, only to make this in turn the objective of ambitious republican matrons. His movements were pegged out months in advance by social strategists. Every January the *hôteliers* at Cannes trembled at the thought that something might prevent him from taking his usual trip to the Riviera, and black were their hearts when this dread event happened.

Yet, like the Homeric heroes on the field of battle, he could sometimes escape in a mist of incognito. Officially

he dissociated himself from the 1889 Paris Exhibition. As Prince of Wales he could have nothing to do with such a centenary glorification of revolution, whatever his love for France and the life of her people — acting in this abstention against the advice of Lord Salisbury, who wished him to take an official part as he had in 1878. Privately he visited the Exhibition with his Princess and daughters, who shared their father's and mother's simplicity, throwing aside etiquette and shocking old-fashioned prejudices by smoking cigarettes. They all ascended M. Eiffel's stupendous tower, which to some earnest Bible-reading Anglo-Saxons seemed an affront to the Almighty, and enjoyed together the pleasures of the Fair. Another ascent he made with Lady Warwick, insisting on taking her to the very top of the tower, which they reached by an outside staircase, viewing the panorama of modern Babylon from the foot of the flag-staff. In M. Eiffel's eyrie they met Edison, and the Prince over luncheon added another master-mind to his unique collection of celebrities.

The reigning beauty and her sister had been visiting Paris with the Prince and his equerry, — a square party, — doing the theatres, convulsed by light and improper Palais Royal farces, eating at famous restaurants quiet meals which the Prince always chose himself, the ladies restraining their admiration when they all went shopping so that they should not abuse the Prince's passion for giving presents. They supped at the Comédie-Française with Coquelin, where the party included Sarah, then unquestionably divine, Réjane, and a galaxy of wit. With Lord Warwick, who joined them later, they saw Detaille's studio, a soberer pleasure — La Goulue was the nearest the Prince got to a real painter like Toulouse-Lautrec. Such a visit was the more amusing for being unconventional. In any case Paris was a law unto itself, respecting his incognito, chuckling under the honest impulse of the *esprit gaulois* at his salted doings and using

his name and features and splendid rotund figure to hall-mark its wares — clothes, underclothes, braces, cigars, liqueurs, anything that by a stretch of ingenuity could be hitched on to his royal prestige.

It was indeed a responsibility, however easily he managed to carry it. Apart from its commercial potentialities, it showed itself in all kinds of private loyalties and curiosities. There was the umbrella cherished by Mr. Walter Harris — a lover of Morocco, and the only *Times* correspondent who has also been a humorist — because the Prince's cigar had once burned a hole in it. There were the chairs up and down England on which the Prince had sat, the combs he had used, the beds in which he had slept — the sharp eyes of a ghillie, shown the royal couch and the depressions in its pillows by his friend the butler whilst the royal occupant breakfasted, once produced a professional observation at which the King must have laughed heartily had anyone ever dared to tell him. "That was the chair the King sat on — sit down on it," said a great Edwardian lady as she walked into her drawing-room before dinner and surprised a housemaid trying in turn the armchairs which might have supported the King when he took tea that afternoon with her understanding mistress. Prestige like this was a responsibility not to be lightly dismissed.

But zeal stretched further than mere social leadership of the world of fashion, or the laying down of canons for the Ritz-Carlton life then burgeoning over Europe. When he opened the Forth Bridge, the Prince astonished everyone with an elaborate discourse on engineering, which was not the speech of a tired or a bored man. And he was never so active as during the nineties in the war against disease, where the nineteenth century won some of its most glorious victories. Father Damien had recently died heroically whilst bringing the relief of medicine and the comfort of religion to the lepers in the South Seas. The Prince "knew

nothing of the scandals" with which gossip seasoned the story of Father Damien's life. But he placed himself at the head of those who were fired by the missionary's example to carry on the battle against this foul contagion. At about this time, also, his eldest sister easily persuaded him to give that encouragement to the study of bacteriology in which Germany had specialized, what afterwards came to be known as the Lister Institute springing from the joint efforts of the Prince of Wales and the future Lord Lister. And he identified himself with the anti-tuberculosis campaign, the upper hand which medicine has now gained over this scourge of past generations owing much to him. "If preventible, why not prevented?" Such was the questioning attitude he took up on this widespread malady. His sympathy and interest have their memorial in the great King Edward VII Sanatorium at Midhurst in the sunny Weald. No empty compliment was paid him when, in the Diamond Jubilee Year, the Royal College of Physicians made him an Honorary Fellow.

This care for the sick and suffering was the prompting of a wide humanity, the pity of a healthy man anxious that all in their measure should be able to enjoy his own Epicureanism. In his ripe maturity the Prince, well served by sound digestion, had not to suffer the liberty, usually unwelcome, though Cicero priggishly praised it, that follows in the wake of physiological fatigue. Life was still to him a dome of many-colored glass, not so much staining the white radiance of eternity as pleasantly refracting the varied colors of a world full of sensual delights, and offering a perpetual source of interest — or chagrin — in the behavior of its men and women, its emperors and kings, and not least of its race horses and pheasants.

A prince, Louis XIV wrote for the benefit of his son, should always be a perfect model of virtue. But if, like other men, he happens to fall, he should at least observe

two rules: the time given to his loves must never be to the prejudice of state business, and the beauty who provides the Prince with his pleasure must never take the liberty of talking to him of his affairs. The great Louis did not always practise this counsel of perfection, and in the case of our hero, too, the characters of prince and man sometimes overlapped. We owe it to Lady Warwick for having given us some vivid pictures of King Edward's more personal reactions to the events of his Edwardian world. Not content with being a vision of beauty, she also saw them — visions of a regenerate, foxless, socialistic England, of a Europe where Germany and England stood side by side, of a New World finding its link with the old through Warwick Castle. He listened to her schemes for the betterment of her fellows with patience, believed she offered a valuable example to her sisters so long as she kept her activities within the domain of education and philanthropy, — the Prince disliked the idea of women mingling in the hurly-burly of politics, — and he did not refuse to talk to her of the international problems that continually held his attention. His indulgence only stopped short of one thing. He had no belief in the panacea of socialism, and when she touched on this to her all-absorbing subject he would shrug his shoulders and remark that society is not made but grows.

This great lady, whose sincerity was naturally questioned by her class, who looked upon her as a renegade, had, in her own words, "an intimate and dear friend in King Edward for many years." She chafed at being a woman, and so cut off from public life; on the other hand, she used the arts of personal influence with classical adroitness. We see her failing in the attempt, inspired by a minister in Lord Salisbury's Government, — one may guess Joseph Chamberlain, — to make the Prince change his mind regarding the Kaiser, "whom he loathes." But she introduced W. T. Stead — whom he had once held in aversion — to him over

the luncheon table and received the next day a note thanking her for having given him the opportunity of meeting "a remarkable man who made a far more favourable impression on me than I ever believed possible. Some day," the Prince added with royal modesty, "I hope to hear from *you* the impression *I* made on *him*."

That Don Quixote of Fleet Street had won his spurs of notoriety in the fight against white slavery and was now tilting at greater windmills. The Peace of Europe was the impulse of his chivalry, the Tsar his Dulcinea. Mr. Stead's self-appointed mission to Petersburg the Prince did not decry. But he was no idealist, like Mr. Stead, to be deceived by the Tsar's Rescript on Disarmament. "As regards the Tsar's idea of disarmament throughout all nations," he wrote to Lady Warwick apropos of Stead's plans, "it is the greatest rubbish and nonsense I ever heard of. The thing is simply *impossible*."

The Prince's loyalty to those around him was well exemplified when, after the Jameson Raid, rumor had it that Lady Warwick had written to the German Emperor protesting against his congratulatory telegram to President Kruger. Count Munster, the German Ambassador in Paris and a connection by marriage of Lady Warwick's, told her mother that she had written "a most impertinent letter" to the Kaiser when "she ought to have dressed in black and held her tongue and pen." So angry was the Prince at this insult that he drafted a letter for Lady Warwick to send to the undiplomatic diplomat. "Mamma (or my mother) has shown me your letter," it began and then proceeded to deny the offense brought against the writer. . . . Lady Warwick had not the honor of His Majesty's acquaintance and it was not therefore likely she should write to him. . . . Count Munster should have disbelieved so palpable a lie! "This is, however, not the first time you have said unkind things about me to Mamma, as a few years ago you asked



*Edward H. Gooch*

LADY WARWICK





her at Homburg when I was going to be divorced!" Lady Warwick dutifully recopied and dispatched this naïvely human document, which ended with the threat that she would boycott the German Embassy in Paris.

He followed the Johnsonian precept of keeping his friendships in repair. His first meeting with Sir Felix Semon, the great laryngologist, took place under unusual circumstances. Lillie Langtry, as she became "less of a lady and more of an actress," necessarily receded from his circle, yet his interest in this woman of surpassing beauty remained. About to open a season at the St. James's Theatre, she suddenly lost her voice and was treated by Dr. Semon. One day when the doctor called at her hotel in Hanover Street, he was told she had a visitor — she might not be able to receive him. He sent up his card. Without delay he was admitted, to find himself face to face with the Prince of Wales. Mrs. Langtry presented him. The Prince nodded coldly. Speaking in German, he said that he had heard of him — surely he was a great friend of Count Herbert Bismarck's. Dr. Semon, standing "bolt upright," admitted to having that honor, and the Prince, who hated the Count, changed the conversation to the patient's condition, showing his anxiety that she should be cured before her first night. From this inauspicious beginning sprang an intimacy which lasted till within a few years of the King's death.

With Lord Charles Beresford he quarreled, about this time, on the one matter where no reconciliation between men is possible. The fickleness of a woman's heart stirred the wild Irish temperament which for thirty years had been so congenial to the Prince, until in the fury of the moment, so clubmen said, it hardly stopped short of violence. The bereft Lord Charles Beresford rushed to Marlborough House and advanced with uplifted hand upon the Prince, who retreated before him, maintaining his *sang-froid* as he

subsided upon the sofa, in one last act of friendship saying: "Don't strike me." When, later, Lord Charles saw his professional enemy, Lord Fisher, firmly installed at the Admiralty and Buckingham Palace, he had further reason to reflect on the instability of human relationships.

Admiral Fisher only became an intimate of the Prince after his accession. Two others who were familiar figures of Edwardian society the King learned to appreciate during the last chapter of his career as Prince of Wales. The Marquis de Soveral, a Don Juanesque diplomat who had brought from Berlin the sobriquet of "The Blue Monkey," — a tribute to his swarthinness, — soon became an intimate, and his wit and manners later gave him an influence at Court as great in its way as that wielded by the very different Stockmar of early Victorian days. Sir Ernest Cassel, who at the end of King Edward's reign enjoyed the royal confidence to an unprecedented degree, owed his position to other qualities. The grim and taciturn Jewish financier, who would clench his fists with passion at the dinner table, and the Portuguese man of the world, flattering himself on his fascination, but whose vanity did not prevent his being an incomparable courtier, afforded an odd contrast that testified to the King's catholicity in friendship.

Amongst the crowned heads he loved best his brother, the King of Greece, and his father of Denmark. Fat Portugal, though a rare shot, lacked finesse. Little Nicholas of Russia, under the thumb of the Anglophobe Muravief, was an autocrat "weak as water." This could not be said of the Prince's cousin Leopold of Belgium, a rich old debauchee, darkly exploiting the Congo, proud of nothing except his child, Ostend, — a week-end Mohammedan paradise for the London bourgeoisie, — and his forts at Liège and Antwerp — formidable strong places, he boasted, such as few countries possessed. Leopold was an unamiable and boring personage, but his path did not cross the Prince's except,

it might be, in Paris, where ingenuity had sometimes to be exercised in avoiding him. Nephew William, on the other hand, was unescapable. Throughout the early nineties he turned Cowes, which the Prince used to look upon as a pleasant holiday, "into nothing but a nuisance." If only the Kaiser's English blood had given him some of the instincts of a gentleman, if only he could have been natural and human, it would not have mattered. But he was always setting the Prince's teeth on edge. He would arrive on his pretentious yacht, the *Hohenzollern*, a cross between a liner and a battleship, and behave with the pomposity of a parvenu emperor or the exuberance of an uncouth undergraduate, treating his uncle as if he were a *fainéant* prince-ling, and laughing at him behind his back as a philanderer or an armchair Field Marshal.

It only made a bad matter worse when the Kaiser did this to his face. One night he was dining as the Prince's guest on board the royal yacht, the modest little *Osborne*, which looked as if it had been intended for a cross-channel paddle steamer, when a message reached him from the Queen. England and France, whose relations bordered on hysteria, had worked themselves up to the verge of war over Meekong, in remote Siam. Lord Rosebery, the Foreign Minister, considered the situation critical and wished the Kaiser to be informed. The Emperor William read the communication, the contents of which were unknown to the Prince of Wales, and then turned and slapped him on the back as he exclaimed in German: "So then, thou 'lt soon be off to India to show what thou 'rt good for as a soldier."

During five regattas the Prince had the brunt of entertaining this uneasy young man whose ambition to dominate Europe made it seem natural to him that he should be "boss of Cowes." The Prince was meditating abstention another year, when the Kaiser's impulsiveness and Lord Salisbury's nonchalance brought matters to a head. The

Kaiser's offense lay in a fire-eating speech on board the cruiser *Worth*, then lying in the Solent as escort to the *Hohenzollern*, which recalled the defeat of the French at that battle twenty-five years before — a piece of bad manners which the Prince felt as keenly as anyone. Two days later the Kaiser, in his turn, took umbrage at what he considered the rudeness of the British Prime Minister. Lord Salisbury, invited to discuss the Turkish question, then particularly acute over the Armenian massacres, reached the *Hohenzollern* an hour late. His apologies were not couched in sufficiently humble a key, and the Kaiser showed his anger in a frigid jocularly at the expense of Lord Salisbury's Turkish policy — a policy which certainly was foolish enough. A proposal from the Kaiser to continue the conversation next morning Lord Salisbury misunderstood; when he failed to appear, the German Emperor's wrath was great, and the memory of it probably helped to inspire the famous Kruger telegram which very nearly antedated the World War — so far as England and Germany were concerned — by eighteen years.

It was bad enough to turn jolly Cowes into a political cockpit. The Prince found the Kaiser's sportsmanship still more trying. Both had a royal fondness for winning. The inferiority which the Kaiser always felt in the presence of his uncle extended to their yachts. *Meteor* was no match for *Britannia*, still to-day one of the best racing cutters afloat, and its owner put the blame on the Royal Yacht Squadron handicaps. Failing to influence that august and amphibious body, he vented his spite on the Commodore, his uncle. When the two boats were to race together for the Queen's Cup, *Meteor* remained at her moorings and *Britannia* sailed the course alone — an imperial gesture that he hoped would annoy "the old peacock." Determined to have the last word, the Kaiser ordered a *Meteor II* from the designer of *Britannia* and next season enjoyed his

revenge; the Prince had to admit that his nephew had a faster boat, and *Britannia* for the time raced no more.

Still the Kaiser was not satisfied. His telegram to President Kruger had made him so unpopular with his grandmother's subjects that he stayed away from Cowes. But he continued to race *Meteor II* and to protest against the handicapping of the R. Y. S. Within eighteen months of his accession, the Prince once again knew an uncle's exasperation. The Kaiser telegraphed to the Committee: "Your handicaps are appalling." Could anything be more unsporting? The complaint came before the Prince, who sent for Baron von Eckardstein of the German Embassy and told him what he thought. "It is really enough to make one despair," he said, as he showed him his master's telegram. "Here I am taking the greatest trouble to put the Kaiser straight to some extent with British public opinion after all that has happened of late years — and here he is beginning to throw mud at us again." In spite of the mud, however, *Meteor II* won. It is a curious fact, borne out also by the records of the America's Cup, that yacht racing is very far from cleansing, in the salt, honest breath of the sea, the animosities that the fallen state of man makes to fester in the human heart.

These estrangements did not worry Lord Salisbury, to whom old age had brought an aloofness in keeping with the splendid isolation of England. A caustic wit concealed the lethargy of this Victorian statesman as he marched with ponderous courage from crisis to crisis and within the space of four years delivered three ultimatums and waged, or envisaged the probability of waging, war with countries so far apart as the Transvaal and Venezuela, Germany, France, and the United States. The Prince watched the heavy-handed Prime Minister, who was his own Foreign Secretary, and grumbled. No two men could have been more unlike: the Prince who knew all the leading

personalities of Europe, the Premier who was said sometimes not to recognize the junior members of his own Ministry; the one a supple or at least a patient diplomatist, waiting to refashion his country's international relations, the other who on and off had been playing the cards of high policy for twenty years and had lost whatever interest he originally felt in the game. In nothing did they differ more than in their reactions to the great Republic which Mr. Stead, the Fleet Street oracle and the Garvin of the time, prophetically believed would Americanize the world.

Lord Salisbury looked upon the United States with Laodicean eyes. He did not thrill to the promise of that young country, producing a synthetic culture which the masses everywhere in the glorious coming century would be able to afford. Unlike the Prince of Wales, he cared little, and perhaps knew less, about its finer specimens, its enterprising newspaper proprietors, its Pierpont Morgans, lavish in everything but words, its ladies whose social technique was so sure and cool. But he felt an intellectual discomfort at the professional ways of Washington, which unblushingly made the best of both worlds, using an idealistic formula to square the imperialist circle, and he allowed it to have the better of his discretion in the affair of the disputed frontier between British Guiana and Venezuela.

For some time the Foreign Office had been engaged in placid negotiations with this uncomfortable neighbor to one of the outposts of a scattered Empire. Nothing pressed. The matter subtended a small visual angle in Downing Street, and the Venezuelans, moreover, proved difficult parties to such diplomatic conversations, since revolution formed the normal condition of their political life. Even when armed bands penetrated into the disputed territory, the Foreign Office maintained its long-suffering attitude, and it would probably have been ready to continue its pacific remonstrances to a diplomatic infinity had not

Mr. Olney, the American Secretary of State, suddenly given a nasty twist to the Lion's tail, in a dispatch which declared that Great Britain was infringing the Monroe Doctrine and that the question in dispute must be referred to "impartial arbitration." There were precedents for the American attitude, as ruled by the dogma originally put forth by President Monroe with the approval and backing of Canning. Lord Salisbury, however, was not content to meet Mr. Olney with counter-precedent; he dealt out at the same time an ultimatum to Venezuela, a gesture typical of the diplomacy which marked the last stage in the growth of the British Empire.

The opportunity was too good to miss. President Cleveland, offering a Roland for Lord Salisbury's Oliver, announced in a Message to Congress that he was about to send a Commission to delimit the disputed frontier, and that its decision would, if necessary, be imposed by force on Great Britain. And, as Uncle Sam complacently crossed his arms and cocked his eye, John Bull stamped with rage. War, in the familiar phrase, looked inevitable. Both countries seethed with excitement. Comedians in London music halls roused frantic enthusiasm by "guying the Yankees." The same pugnacious Anglo-Saxon blood boiled the more vigorously in the United States for its Celtic infusion. It appeared as if the dream of a second millennium, a twentieth-century dream of a union between the Teutonic peoples, Great Britain, America, and Germany, a vision on which Joseph Chamberlain, W. T. Stead, and Cecil Rhodes looked with prophetic gaze, would be shattered by a miserable squabble over some square miles of tropical forest, would be dissipated for ever by the rashness of an American politician anxious to win popularity, and by the stereotyped methods of an English politician who held his place from a mistaken sense of duty.

Lord Salisbury, needless to say, did not want war. At

the same time he rated diplomatic punctilio as more important than the friendly gesture which would open the eyes of both countries to the absurdity of the situation. Not so the Prince of Wales, and when his friend, Mr. Joseph Pulitzer of the *New York World*, with whom he had had many a conversation over the waters of Homburg, sent him a cable six days after the presidential message, asking for his views of the situation, he decided to intervene. As luck would have it, it was almost the eve of Christmas, an auspicious time for the display of an olive branch. The Prince immediately penciled a reply : —

I thank you for tgm. I earnestly trust and cannot but believe present crisis will be arranged in a manner satisfactory to both countries, and will be succeeded by same warm feeling of friendship which has existed between them for so many years.

It said nothing, yet it said everything — a perfect diplomatic document. Good manners demanded that he should show the draft to Lord Salisbury ; good sense that he should override the Prime Minister's objections. He cabled it to America, where it formed a Christmas Eve message to a cousinly people. Irritation subsided as quickly as it had arisen. Thanks to the Prince's gesture, both countries penitently declared that never again would they threaten one another, and a Treaty of Arbitration was signed between them in the following year. Unfortunately the influence of the Prince did not reach the Senate, which refused its ratification. But this left his goodwill unimpaired as he continued to assist the American invaders of England to consolidate the positions they had won, and he had the pleasure, during his reign, of seeing the American Embassy, then installed in Dorchester House, under his friend Mr. Whitelaw Reid, become one of the brilliant centres of Edwardian hospitality, the millionaire ambassador entertaining on a scale which dazzled London and even the blasé



tradesmen of Mayfair, who still talk of that Fortunatus with admiration and historic regret — a man whose fish-monger's bills were £80 a week, thought they, was an ambassador indeed.

Yet sometimes it seemed that the shadows were palpably beginning to lengthen. This protagonist of a new order found change outrunning its sense of direction. His old resilience showed signs of hardening. The first frosts of the winter of age touched his world. Things were not what they had been. With his future subjects his popularity was now more secure than ever, and the sympathy between them, which found expression when his beloved Persimmon won the Derby in 1897, grew only the stronger with every passing year. But he looked beyond England, and there, from the horizon to the zenith, the prospect was black indeed. The profoundly unsatisfactory position of his country amongst the nations was emphasized by the fact that Paris, which he had known for nearly fifty years, became almost closed to him as the last years of the century ebbed away. The Dreyfus Affair had been a shocking indictment of a régime presided over by a corrupt old man aping monarchical grandeur. For Félix Faure the Prince felt very little sympathy. The unbridled passions which the President seemed to typify surged up against England, first over Fashoda and then over the Boer War. M. Delcassé already nourished the idea of the Entente that it had been the Prince's ambition to bring about for thirty years, but outwardly relations between the two countries were never so strained. If the Prince could not acquit Lord Salisbury of blame for the antagonism, he refused to follow his suggestion of attending the Paris Exhibition of 1900, and in that year he avoided even the Riviera, paying a visit instead to Denmark, where he could be sure of escaping the annoyances to which French Anglophobia might subject him. On his way he narrowly escaped assassination at the Gare du

Nord in Brussels when a boy of fifteen, Sipido by name, excited by pro-Boer propaganda, jumped on the footboard of the royal saloon and fired at him point-blank. All four shots went wide, though one of them lodged in the wall of the compartment within a few inches of the heads of the Prince and the Princess. "Fortunately," he wrote to Sir Frank Lascelles, the British Ambassador in Berlin, "Anarchists are bad shots. The dagger is far more to be feared than the pistol" — a remark in keeping with the courage that the Prince always showed in the ever-present danger that surrounds kingship from the fanatic's hand.

The extraordinary treatment of the case by the Belgian authorities did little to soften the Prince's feelings for King Leopold. Sipido was ordered to be detained in a house of correction till he came of age. His three adult accomplices were acquitted. Pending the hearing of his appeal, the would-be assassin was released and at once escaped to France, where apparently no efforts were made to arrest him. The Kaiser, who throughout had shown his sympathy, having traveled specially to Altona when he was returning from Denmark to congratulate the Prince on his escape, expressed himself strongly in a letter to his uncle on the behavior of the Belgians. "Either their laws are ridiculous," he wrote, "or the jury are a set of d——d, bl——dy scoundrels." King Leopold set to work in the autumn, and, as the result of some detective and diplomatic efforts of his own in Paris, succeeded in getting Sipido caught and extradited. But if the Prince of Wales reacted favorably to the Kaiser's vigorously expressed concern, he remained impenetrably cold towards his cousin Leopold, who was destined to receive no favors from the King of England in the reign that was about to begin.

## XIV

### EDUARDUS REX

THE aged Queen's reign of over sixty-four years came to an end in the evening of January 22, 1901, when the twentieth century was a stripling but three weeks old. She passed away at Osborne, — which, after Balmoral, she loved best of her palaces, — surrounded by her children and grandchildren. The august old lady, personifying a whole era which already by the endless process of change was fading into history, drew her last breath in the arms of her eldest grandson, the Kaiser; "Bertie" was the last word whispered by those lips which had modeled the English tongue with a precise and silvery beauty — son and grandson, as some hoped, at last fully reconciled in the presence of death.

Before he turned to the task before him, the Prince of Wales mourned his loss as an affectionate and warm-hearted son. "My beloved Mother, the Queen, has just passed away . . ." he telegraphed to the Lord Mayor of London when a King of fifteen minutes standing. And coming up to London next morning he presided over the first Council of his reign, after the Archbishop had administered the usual oath, beginning a short speech to his Councilors on the same note of sorrow and bereavement. "This is the most painful occasion on which I shall ever be called upon to address you," he said in a voice that did not hide his emotion. His first and melancholy duty, he continued, was to announce to them the death of the Queen, and here again he gave her the epithet he had used in his message to the Lord Mayor. He knew how deeply they,

the whole nation, and indeed the whole world, sympathized with him in the irreparable loss they had all sustained. He could barely get the words out, and a moment's silence marked what must have been one of the most human scenes in the records of the King in his Council. Then, recovering himself, he assured them that he was fully determined to be a constitutional sovereign in the strictest sense of the word, and so long as there was breath in his body to work for the good and amelioration of his people. He would be known by the name of Edward, which had been borne by six of his ancestors; he desired that the name of his father, Albert the Good, should stand alone. "In conclusion, I trust to Parliament and the nation to support me in the arduous duties which now devolve upon me by inheritance, and to which I am determined to devote my whole strength during the remainder of my life."

These words, which served as a text for his reign, the more deeply impressed the elderly gathering of men eminent in the state for the unexpected light they threw on the new King's character. Here were foreshadowed qualities which even those who knew him best had hardly suspected. The warmth and spontaneity of his speech, its unassuming simplicity coupled with the profound belief in the vocation which now called him, a belief heightened by the very absence of any reference to the Almighty — all indicated a master. Luckily perhaps, since the best of speeches read cold in print, his recorded words, as we have them, are not his own. When he finished speaking he was asked for his manuscript so that a copy might be prepared for the press. But none existed, for he had merely thought over what he was going to say during the train journey to Town, and the first flush of royal displeasure occurred on his learning that no shorthand notes had been taken. The summary given to the world, a mere *précis* put together by some of those present, conveyed little of the "dignity and pathos" of

the original; yet it made a not ineffective answer to the doubts that were already being ventilated as to whether the new King had the moral stamina to withstand the temptations that surround the throne. It was true, as the *Times* pointed out that same morning, that these surrounded more enticingly the heir to the throne than its occupant, and the King had passed through a "tremendous ordeal, prolonged through youth and manhood to middle age," an ordeal from which he had not emerged scatheless. Would the weight of responsibility now give him that steadiness which middle-class opinion regarded as the supreme virtue? At the back of such forebodings stood the memory of the Regency, the shadow of George IV. But the ghost of that cultured roysterer, faithful companion to the Prince's reputation for forty years, was now at last destined to fade away under the brilliance of the new reign as the King began to play the part for which destiny and the education of nearly a lifetime fitted him.

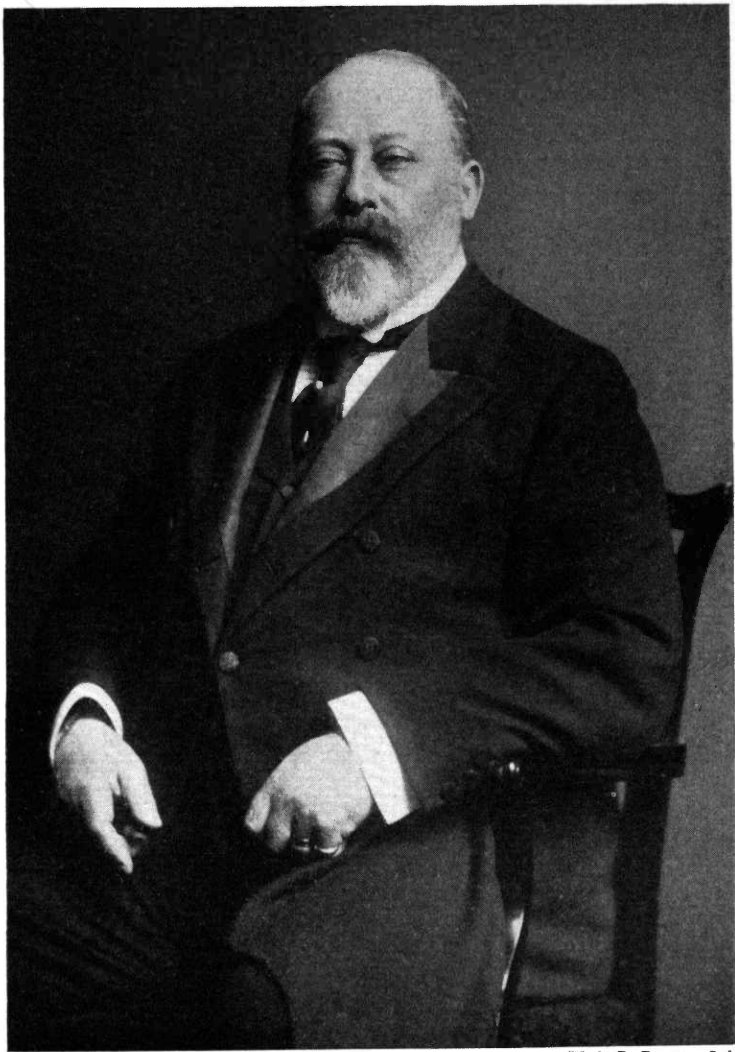
King Edward's début showed how well he understood the *métier* for which he had trained himself with such assiduity, and also the temper of his subjects. A modesty valued by the Englishman above everything else, since it is the essence of the amateur spirit, formed the basis of his character. How striking was the gentlemanly reticence of his accession speech compared with the overweening rodomontades of his imperial German nephew! He was quite conscious of the fact, one of his courtiers writes, that he was a very ordinary man with no particular excellencies in any one direction. At the same time, like the saint's humility which turns to granite when his sainthood is in question, he had as King a magnificent pride. Even on the day of his mother's funeral he gave proof of it. The royal yacht that followed in the wake of the vessel carrying the late Queen's remains was flying the standard at half-mast. He asked the reason.

"The Queen is dead, Sir," the captain answered.

"The King of England lives," he replied, and ordered the flag to be run up to the masthead.

The King of England — his full title ran, "By the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King," a catalogue hardly lightened by the addition of "Defender of the Faith," a papal honor, and of "Emperor of India," which had displeased him as Prince of Wales, though now he assumed it without demur — the King of England, in M. Poincaré's words, was as averse to any attitudinizing as to any familiarity. Nothing could have been simpler than the way he took up his great inheritance. From the first he was completely at his ease. He entered on all problems attendant on the refashioning of the Court, whilst making no complaints, as his nephew had done, at the arrears of routine work caused by the failing health of his predecessor. The thousands of papers that awaited his signature threatened to turn him into a signing machine until he finally employed a rubber stamp for those of less moment — in itself an innovation that spoke of change. Rarely using his study on the first floor at Marlborough House, he installed himself in a more convenient room downstairs, looking on to the garden, which he shared with some of his entourage. The King supervised their labors, going from one desk to another, asking innumerable questions and punctuating the answers with the characteristic "Yes . . . Yes . . . Yes," giving his orders, now economically scribbling almost illegible memoranda on the torn half sheets of note paper beloved of good Edwardians, now standing in front of the fire, and always between his lips the enormous cigar that in the end was to shorten his days.

Formality was reduced to a minimum. Those working with him could smoke in the presence, — an extraordinary privilege, — could enter unannounced and leave without



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KING EDWARD VII





permission, merely making a bow as they withdrew. Lord Esher, who lived these laborious mornings, tells us how the King gave the impression of a man suddenly freed from restraint and unconsciously reveling in his liberty — unconsciously, for had anyone been rash enough to suggest it to him he “would have repudiated the idea with violence.” King Edward stood out in nothing more typically English than his distrust of self-knowledge, and indeed of any intellectual process that was not directed towards action.

But while etiquette remained his servant, and he could stretch it so far as to enjoy issuing orders to a roomful of workmen as he sat amongst them, the underlying feeling of awe exerted its perpetual restraint on those around him. Success at the Court of King Edward called for a nimble wit, or at least an unfailing sense of social values, and it required a keen flair to know when the good story had better be left untold and the retort unmade. More than one of the Prince’s friends found bluff manners no longer a passport to favor. There was also a Queen whose deafness created a barrier that must never be recognized, a thing often requiring the utmost nicety of tact. To show all honor to his consort, a model of the wifely virtues and with good sense equal to his own, the King did not delay in making her a Lady of the Garter, the first to be thus enrolled in the oldest order of chivalry since Henry VII gave a new life to England. When the question arose of placing the Queen’s banner in St. George’s, Garter King-at-Arms declared it to be unprecedented and indeed contrary to the statutes of the Order. This ruling only caused a King who was “somewhat reckless of precedent” to create one, and in spite of its unorthodox heraldry the banner was hung over her stall, a prophetic assertion of the victory for which women were fighting.

The sudden emergence of the monarchy into the Edwardian sunlight after the subdued dusk of Queen Victoria’s long widowhood made changes inevitable. The great

officers of the Court, the Earl Marshal at their head, held their places in virtue of their birth. But the salaried officials stood on a different footing. Habitually loyal to his own servants, the King kept round him those who had formed his entourage as Prince of Wales, gentlemen whose discretion had been unfailing and whose stiffness, which malice attributed to a sense of self-importance, had set off the Roman *civilitas* that always stamped their master as the soul of social amenity. It was an elderly household, grown old with its head and presided over by the two veterans, Lord Knollys and Sir Dighton Probyn, a mutiny hero. Most of its members were soldiers who had made the classic transition from camp to court, an exception being Sir Maurice Holzmann, originally a discovery of the Prince Consort's, whom Dilke long before had declared to be the ablest of the Prince's suite. Thirty-eight years was the length of his service as Librarian at Marlborough House and in the office of the Duchy of Cornwall. Others could look back on almost as long a record.

One appointment, however, caused some discussion. Did the King have to confirm in his post the late Sovereign's Poet? Lord Salisbury, who gave the official wreath to Alfred Austin because, as he ruefully explained, no one else had applied for the laurel crown, probably considered him a fitting Laureate for an unpoetical age. Since Mr. Rudyard Kipling, the only obvious candidate, had rendered himself ineligible by his poem on the Widow of Windsor, more serious persons were of opinion that the office should be allowed to lapse. Lord Salisbury refused to interfere with a matter that concerned the King alone, who, though no connoisseur, thought little of his bard. But since his muse was not a charge on the Privy Purse, the King decided that Alfred Austin might continue to bear it. "As long as he gets *no* pay it would," he wrote to his Prime Minister, "I think be best to renew the appointment in his favour."

Amidst general curiosity as to what the new reign would bring forth in visible splendors,—curiosity whetted rather than damped by the knowledge that both the King and the Queen made no secret of their belief that their honors had come to them too late in life to be borne as they would have wished to bear them,—the curtains were drawn and the windows opened in the royal palaces. Windsor Castle, the picturesque ruin at which *Punch* was used to laugh, could retain its mediæval air but not its mediæval plumbing; the mid-Victorian dust in Buckingham Palace,—“The Sepulchre,” as the King called it,—had to be swept away; everywhere the ornaments posing as *objets d’art*, the hundreds of gifts, trowels, souvenirs, offerings, the tribute of a world during sixty years, had to be collected, catalogued, and for the most part disposed of. There were photographs, too, in their thousands, demanding for their identification a knowledge of the men and women of a Europe now past that King Edward with his infallible memory alone could supply.

As he cast his eyes round, it struck him that Hampton Court would form a fine background for the pageantry he envisaged, an English Versailles where his subjects could see their sovereign and feel that in his daily life, and not only in his ceremonial excursions, he belonged to them. This scheme was hardly more than a passing idea, and in any case would have had to be sacrificed to economy. But economy could not rule out the new standards of comfort called for by the times, though no contriving could bring the kitchens at Balmoral, quite a modest castle, nearer than seventy yards to the dining room, or make Osborne anything but a white elephant. Balmoral had its deer forest, but Osborne had no deer, no pheasants, nothing to recommend it, and it required all the King’s tact and the exercise of his authority as head of the family to convince his sisters that their mother’s wishes for her Isle of Wight villa to

remain one of the homes of the sovereign were unrealizable. Change was everywhere. The Q. C. (Queen's Counsel) disappeared from the courts, Her Majesty's Theatre from the Haymarket. The alteration of the royal monogram from V. R. to E. R. caused cockney wits to answer the question, "Why was King Edward the Seventh?" by repeating these two letters. And the duster that passed over the surface of society did not omit the state coach grown dingy from years of disuse in the Royal Mews of Pimlico. It was almost a restoration.

The resemblance went further. This refurbishing of the royal palaces and of the accoutrements of royalty only symbolized what had to be done in all departments of the State. Everywhere the dust lay thick. Parliament itself, forming the very muscles and tissues of constitutional kingship, its Victorian heyday past, its great figures gone, lay flaccid under the domination of the Conservatives, who showed their poverty of invention by belaboring the jingo drum Dizzy had added to the party orchestra. It had often made pleasant music for the Prince, but so had Liberalism, which many believed to be dying; for Labor, hitherto an ally, was preparing to launch its own craft. No strong opposition postulated by the King as essential to parliamentary government braced the fibres of the administration.

This debility reflected itself in the public departments, where the machinery creaked and groaned. The War Office was a subject for jest and anger. "Mounted men not required" had been its motto in the early days of the South African War, and it continued to move from blunder to blunder under Mr. Broderick, a minister who felt hurt at the little confidence he inspired in his sovereign, though he set a characteristic Edwardian mark upon the British army in the German cap that he placed upon Tommy Atkins' head. Had the Admiralty been submitted to a test com-

parable with that undergone by the Army in South Africa, people almost wondered whether Britannia would still be ruling the waves. In spite of the fact that the Colonial Office was ruled by Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, the darling of up-to-date Birmingham, a self-made plebeian in a patrician cabinet, it had hopelessly underrated and misjudged the Boers, allowing public opinion in England to conceive this brilliant citizen army of mounted infantry as bearded dotards slouching across the veldt, their rifles at the slope. The Foreign Office, generally admitted to be the most incapable of all the departments, — run by “old women,” as the King put it, — reflected mysterious immensity and divine calm occasionally ruffled by moments of petulance, and cherished the credulity of ignorance that brought about the seizure of the German steamer *Bundesrath* as a contraband carrier — a blunder which helped Admiral von Tirpitz to convince the Germans they must have a larger fleet and caused Lord Salisbury to apologize and offer compensation. Its carelessness in small matters, as in great, allowed a telegram to be sent to the Governor of Kansas thanking him for the *loyalty* and sympathy of the people of that state on the death of Queen Victoria and the accession of King Edward.

Not with instruments such as these could England maintain her place as a world power. Already during the last year of Queen Victoria's reign she had narrowly escaped being faced with a continental coalition, thanks not a little to the firmness of M. Delcassé, always looking to his ideal of the Entente Cordiale, and also to the attitude of Washington, which thus repaid Great Britain for its friendly neutrality in the Spanish-American War. To emerge from an isolation dangerous now and no longer splendid, a new spirit was required, a spirit that found its embodiment in the King, if not in the hereditary officers of his Court. Here too inefficiency ruled. The Great Chamberlain's tickets

for admission to the House of Lords at the state opening of Parliament stated that ladies were to be in mourning and "trousers" — a mistake exciting the laughter that is the first cousin to ridicule and thus particularly obnoxious to the royal sensitiveness.

This function, three weeks after his accession, began to quicken the rhythm that altered the tempo of the whole national life during the reign. The King and Queen rode to Westminster swaying in the gilded coach, a wondrous relic of the past. The royal desire had gone forth that the peers should also drive to Parliament like lords in the traditional painted carriages with their tasseled hammer-cloths and with footmen in state livery standing on the backboards. Bravery such as this made a new and welcome sight. The scene of the Majesty of England, surrounded by his officers of state and faced by the ranks of the peers in scarlet and ermine, so excited the people's representatives that the King on his throne turned pained eyes upon the unseemly mob of frock-coated gentlemen who poured "like hungry wolves" into the House of Lords behind their bewigged Speaker and disturbed the glittering decorum of the scene. Such disorder, if typical of democracy, was tiresome when the King had taken so much trouble with his own part in the ceremony, giving thought to the question whether he should keep his head covered — William IV had done so, but then he was "a silly old man" — and even asking the astonished, but well-primed, official making the arrangements in the House of Lords the precise height of his royal footstool, which had to exceed by one inch that set for the Queen.

Here was nevertheless an impressive example of the tradition of English kingship. Yet before he could read his speech a less agreeable reminder of the past, a cobweb trailing from the religious strife of distant generations, ruffled the royal feelings. In accordance with the Bill of

Rights, he had to repeat a declaration repudiating the doctrine of transubstantiation in the purposively offensive terms originally aimed at James II, who had preferred his faith to his crown. The King took the oath in so low a tone as to show his distaste for a gratuitous insult to his Catholic subjects. When the aged Lord Chancellor handed him the pen and ink for the attaching of the royal signature, the quill slipped from the tray. It could not be seen on the ground and an awful *contretemps* was only avoided by its being observed to have stuck in His Majesty's robes.

In the controversy which arose over this oath, the King's sympathies were all on the side of toleration and opposed to the Protestant prejudices so easily stirred against the Patriarch of the West. He knew this Puritan tinder to be inflammable, but he also had his prejudices, one of which was to respect the religious opinions of all men. He insisted thereupon that his successors should not have to repeat those injurious words. His own preference would have been for abrogating the oath. Lord Salisbury shared his opinion, which, if it reflected popular feeling, went further than the views of the Cabinet as a whole. The emendations as ultimately proposed proved hardly less insulting than the original text, and the King did not feel more cordial towards Lord Halsbury, who as Lord Chancellor managed the business, for allowing him to learn from the papers the recommendations proposed by the Committee appointed by the Government to report upon the matter. It was quite like old times when, as Prince of Wales, he had kept himself primed in his foreign news by reading the *Figaro*.

But whilst it ran against all his inclinations that he should thus have words put into his mouth to create strife instead of the peace and goodwill he wished to be the fruits of his reign, by far the most anxious problem presenting itself in those early months of his kingship was the South African War. This made a gloomy picture indeed. The

prestige of British arms had never sunk lower, and although he believed thoroughly in Lord Kitchener, it disturbed him to observe "how fagged out he seemed to be." The King saw his country presented to Europe as an old lion dying; it appeared to the journalists of the European capitals as being about to succumb to indigestion brought on by the imperialist excesses of Victorian England. The Boers, these hoped, would surely hasten the demise of this ailing Greater Britain typified for the cartoonists in the plethoric figure of its sovereign.



## XV

### THE ENTENTE IS BORN

ANY political prophet who exercised his powers in 1901 would have backed the probability of an understanding, if not an alliance, with Germany. The Kaiser, speaking in the accents of sincerity at a Marlborough House luncheon party when he was about to return home after the Queen's funeral, declared his belief that the "two Teutonic nations would bit by bit learn to know each other better" and stand together in keeping the peace of the world. This avowal supported the policy advocated by Joseph Chamberlain, the most popular figure in the Ministry. The "natural alliance," he had said fifteen months before, "is between ourselves and the German Empire," and the eager vision of this facile politician further descried a new Triple Alliance between Germany, England, and the United States. The King, who had the advantage of never being the victim of his own rhetoric, knew that German public opinion was profoundly hostile to Great Britain, — so hostile that a game of football between Heidelberg students caused a riot, — and, having little confidence in the Kaiser's *politique du théâtre*, attributed no serious importance to the speech. Still, the German Emperor, by his behavior during the Queen's illness and obsequies, had recaptured his popularity with the English public. Stories of his unfeigned grief at his grandmother's death, of his kindness and consideration for all those round him, passed from mouth to mouth. It was related how seamstresses working on the royal pall and shivering in an unwarmed room at Osborne were surprised by his sudden entrance; he expressed his concern, and soon had the fire lit — everyone agreed it was a

kind action showing a kind heart. Under the circumstances, therefore, it was unfortunate that the Kaiser's words of friendliness should have been presented to the British public in a few words of colorless Court Circular paraphrase. And the Kaiser, not without reason, felt aggrieved.

When uncle and nephew, however, met a month later at the sick bed of the Empress Frederick, then dying of cancer, all was again serene. The old griefs seemed to have been forgotten and they were drawn closer together in their common sorrow than ever before. Though the King was one of the few people proof against the Kaiser's personal charm, he submitted to it on this occasion, and on leaving told Sir Frank Lascelles, the British Ambassador, that in the event of any disagreement arising between the two Governments he should ask the Kaiser to write to him direct so that he might "smooth matters down." The invitation proved to be unwise. For King Edward had not reckoned with his nephew's boyish and undiplomatic epistolary style, and a few weeks later there resulted another incident in the uneasy relations between the uncle and his sister's son.

Still eager for a *rapprochement*, the Kaiser expressed his annoyance to Sir Frank Lascelles at England's lack of coöperation with Germany in China, then a storm centre, and in doing so called the British ministers "unmitigated noodles," which the Ambassador, in his dispatch to the Foreign Office, discreetly avoided mentioning. But the Kaiser, obviously pleased with the expression, nullified the Ambassador's reticence by repeating it in a letter to the King — and "unmitigated noodles" are not words that a sensible nephew should use to an irascible uncle about his servants, whether footmen or foreign ministers. True, the Kaiser's knowledge of English idiom was far less than his linguistic self-confidence, and it would have been better for everybody concerned if he had only corresponded with his uncle in German, a language the King spoke better than his own. King Edward

could not be expected to make allowances of this kind; neither was his annoyance softened because he shared to a great extent the Kaiser's views about Lord Salisbury. So he sent for Baron von Eckardstein of the German Embassy, whom both sides used as whipping boy, and greeted that diplomat, when he was shown into the royal study at Marlborough House, with the question, balanced between jest and annoyance: "Well, what have you been about?"

There on the table were Lascelles's dispatch and the Kaiser's letter. The King read aloud some of the dispatch and then most of the letter, the Kaiser's assurances of friendship for England drawing from him the sarcastic comment: "I hope that is so." When he came to "unmitigated noodles" he laid the sheet down and asked: "Well, what do you think of that?"

The Baron was on ground so delicate as to tax even his considerable nerve. When he suggested it should be treated as a joke, the King with a laugh agreed it was the only thing to do. But it was the laugh of anger, for never had the Baron seen his Britannic Majesty so irritated. "Unluckily," said the King, "I have already had to put up with many of these jokes of the Kaiser's — even worse ones than this, too. And I suppose I shall have to put up with many more."

He asked Eckardstein how the Kaiser would like his ministers to be called such names. "As you know," he went on, "I am still of opinion to-day that Great Britain and Germany are natural allies. Together they could police the world and secure a lasting peace. Of course Germany wants colonies and commercial developments, and it can, after all, have as much as it wants of both. Only we can't keep pace with these perpetual vagaries of the Kaiser. . . ."

Were they vagaries? Was the Emperor merely capricious, a difficult man to work with, but well-meaning under his habitual exaggeration both in words and in gesture? Or were his caprices and his bad manners the promptings of a

treacherous mind? The doubts that such questions aroused helped to set Europe in battle array. Yet in 1901 this gifted *enfant terrible* was undoubtedly sincere in his wish for an understanding with the other "Teutonic nation," an expression with an unpleasant tang to English ears. The Triple Alliance on the one hand, the British Empire on the other — these two great groups should bind themselves by a treaty to make common cause against aggressors of either party. In the German view such a pact would guarantee the peace of Europe for fifty years. Lord Lansdowne declared that he found the proposal "attractive," though he interpreted it as a bald suggestion that the British Empire should join the Triple Alliance. But he shrank from such a revolutionary step in foreign policy, which he believed Parliament would never sanction. As a Frenchman has observed, the English do not conclude an alliance except under the direct menace of war, and in this case hesitation was the greater because the Kaiser inspired little confidence, either in St. James's or in Downing Street. Lord Lansdowne, therefore, found consistent backing from the King in his opposition to the German view that an understanding on separate points of world policy was impracticable — that it must be all or nothing, either an alliance or complete disinterestedness. The subsequent history of the Entente, where this traditional hand-to-mouth Foreign Office method prevailed, showed that the Germans had good reason for their attitude.

In contrast to the baffling and irritating William, Nicky, the King's other imperial nephew, who did nothing to set his uncle's teeth on edge, was mere wax in the hands of Anglophobe ministers exploiting his sentimental pacificism. We find King Edward, only two months after his accession, writing to Lord Lansdowne in a tone of profound pessimism about Anglo-Russian relations: "The state of affairs in China regarding the position of Russia and our troops seems to me very grave and as if a conflict were imminent." "The

Emperor," he added, "seems to have no power whatever." And with Russia now went France, indissolubly bound by the alliance which for ten years had driven a wedge between Great Britain and her nearest neighbor. Such war clouds were not less threatening in the knowledge that they might burst while the British Army was locked up in South Africa. Never did the King's lifelong dream of the Entente Cordiale seem more unlikely of realization than in the summer of 1901. France appeared to be hopelessly estranged and the King, in the unnatural state of international relationships, actually dreaded a possible *rapprochement* between France and her enemy Germany.

Yet grave cares of state are often easier to bear than ill-natured sarcasm, and the Kaiser's sardonic jest on his uncle's narrow escape, when the mast of *Shamrock II* went by the board whilst he was cruising in the Solent on that challenger to the America's Cup with Sir Thomas Lipton and Mrs. Keppel, rankled where the Tsar's almost menacing letter left no scar. Though his household was far from preserving the decorum which marked that of the King's, the Kaiser could never refrain from gibing at his uncle's friends of either sex, being egged on by the Crown Prince, whose "quips and jeers" against the English Royal Family were reprobated by Prince von Bülow. In this case the Kaiser's expression of relief that his uncle had not been killed whilst amusing himself with his mistress on his grocer's yacht soon went the rounds of London society. Decidedly this was one of the Kaiser's "worse jokes," and there were enemies to the Kaiser amongst the King's friends who would see that it reached his ears.

Poor Nicky did not joke. His reaction to the same *contretemps* consisted in a letter of congratulation to "My dearest Uncle Bertie" which in reality was a plea to end the campaign in South Africa that looked "like a war of extermination" against a "small people desperately defending

their country." The King's comment on this, as he passed it on to Lord Salisbury, merely ran that the letter was "very kindly meant unless he was put up to it by his ministers or possibly Leyds" (the Boer Secretary of State). For no one had more anxiety to see the war ended than King Edward, and though he countered the Tsar's arguments with one or two sly digs at Russian imperialism which Lord Salisbury provided for him, he ended by saying that he had no doubt, when peace and order were restored, that the territories of the two Republics would enjoy in "a full measure the tranquillity and good government which England has never yet failed to assure to the populations which have come under her sway" — a robust affirmation of faith that he was to see fully realized. But one may believe that King Edward's tone would have been less tinged with Christian charity if, instead of Nicky, it had been his dear William to whom he was writing.

The death of the Empress Frederick brought uncle and nephew together again in the beginning of August, the Kaiser on the King's arrival expressing surprise that he had allowed nearly a week to elapse before coming to pay his last respects to his sister, a sentiment coming ill from a nephew whose treatment of his mother had been one of his uncle's griefs towards him. It proved, however, only a momentary ruffling of royal waters. The threatened squall passed off and the two sovereigns consorted together in all-apparent amity. But small things annoyed the King. He disliked the Kaiser's boisterousness; he disliked, also, the extravagant military displays, both at Homburg and at Potsdam, in which he had to take part. And when they had a political talk — on one such an occasion King Edward seemed to Von Bülow like a mischievous tomcat playing with a mouse — the Kaiser irritated him by making a jocose reference to the Anglo-Japanese Agreement, a diplomatic secret which the King had forgotten and of which Sir Frank Lascelles, who

was present, knew nothing. Such Teutonic bumptiousness was hard to bear with. It made matters no better that King Edward handed the Kaiser a memorandum prepared by Lord Lansdowne for his private information on the questions outstanding between the two countries. One can imagine the careful and scholarly British Foreign Secretary's annoyance when he discovered the diplomatic solecism of which his sovereign had been guilty — a technical lapse, by the way, that left the King impenitent.

With a corresponding elation the Kaiser prepared a counter-memorandum for the King, whom he had arranged to meet at Wilhelmshöhe ten days later, an encounter — the fourth time that year they had been together — marking the end of any serious hopes to secure an Anglo-German understanding. All friendliness reigned at the preliminary luncheon, where on the table stood a centrepiece of the Kaiser's own design, a gift to his uncle. But when they retired afterwards to the garden to talk politics the atmosphere soon changed. The Kaiser's highly colored account of the conversation shows the King not trying to conceal his annoyance at the Tsar's recent visit to Paris, where he had been received with immense *éclat*.

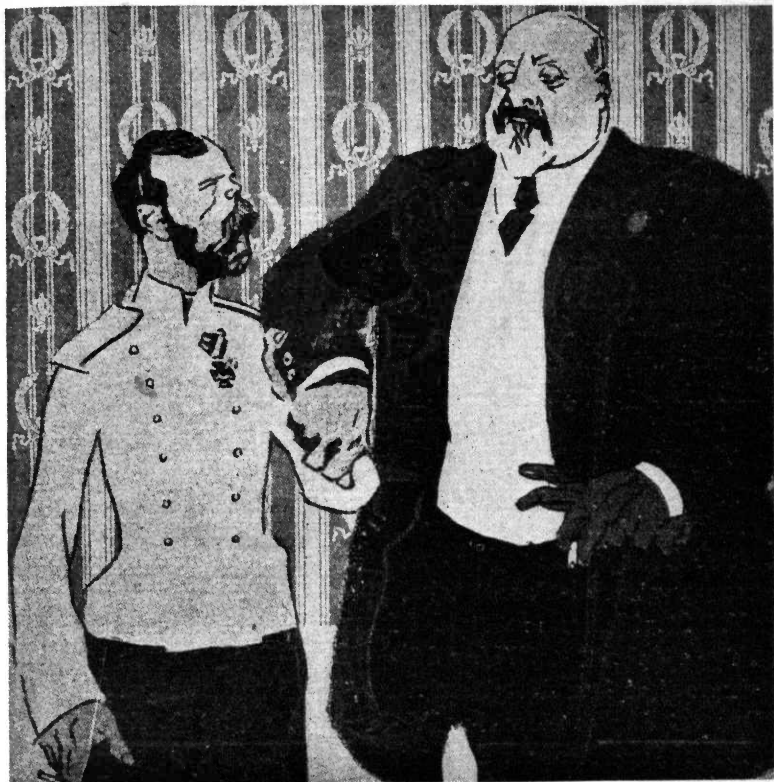
"If he wanted to visit anyone besides yourself, he ought to have come to see me, his nearest relation. It looked like a demonstration against England. . . . The Tsar would probably take money back with him from Paris. . . . What did he want it for?" The Trans-Siberian Railway, suggested the Kaiser, who then introduced the subject of Japan. Was it true, he asked, that Great Britain had refused to lend money to Japan? King Edward's choler rose. He made "a remark of impetuous displeasure at the politics of the English Cabinet and protested that he positively knew nothing of it. . . . The Ambassador came out with a speech in which he said that of course England had offered the money, but had proposed such conditions that it was difficult for the Japa-

nese to accept." And then the Kaiser began to moralize, using in the process of setting to rights his uncle and his uncle's ambassador the words "perfidious Albion" and "treachery." At this, the Kaiser relates, "came lively protests from the King and Sir Frank." Unquestionably it was no part of the King of England's duties to listen to a lecture on international ethics from the German Emperor, and the King "seemed happy when the meeting was over." It was an unsatisfactory end to a conversation which Lord Lansdowne hoped would point the way to agreement with Germany on the question of Morocco, where the German policy was "one of reserve," an expression of sinister import in the language of diplomacy. But that poverty-stricken country, coveted the more for its very barrenness, since its mountains were thought to conceal enormous mineral wealth, was never mentioned. Morocco took its revenge for the oversight by acting as one of the hinges whereon turned the chapter of history that led up to August 5, 1914.

Without a sigh of regret the King left Wilhelmshöhe and returned to drink the waters of Homburg. A fortnight later he joined the Queen at one of those immense family gatherings in Copenhagen which included Tsar Nicholas, now through with his flirtation in Paris, where that austere moral autocrat had found it difficult to be condescending to mere republicans. What did they talk about in the intimacy of that royal house party? The suspicions that kept apart their respective realms? The state of Europe? China? The idiosyncrasies of William? Had the King put in a good Word for the Russian Jews, as Baron Hirsch so often begged him to do? Had he tried to impress his weak and timid nephew with the dangers that lurked in a war with Japan?

The Continent, as always, wondered. And the classic answer is to be found in the "Simplicissimus" cartoon, where the arm of a majestically frock-coated Edward is seized by a puny, uniformed Nicholas, who says: "For two hours, my





A CARTOON FROM "SIMPLICISSIMUS"



dear uncle, you 've been telling me about your tailor. You might at least give me his address." The cartoonist's hand may have been prompted by an artist's vision of truth more piercing than that of the camera a few years later. This showed King Edward talking earnestly to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and striking his fist with his palm. "Is it peace or war?" ran the caption in the Austrian paper which had secured this snapshot from Marienbad, where Ferdinand of Bulgaria, Mr. Haldane, and General Nicholson of the Army Council were also staying. Surely, thought the Austrian public, the King was telling his Prime Minister that Great Britain and Bulgaria must be on the same side in the next war — a prospect that might well depress the Vienna Bourse. Yet we have it on the British Prime Minister's authority that the King was asking his Premier's opinion on no question of international politics but on a matter of more universal interest — whether halibut was better baked or boiled. As Saint Teresa once said, there is a time for partridges and a time for penitence.

It was so easy to suppose that the King of England could only talk to his Prime Minister about politics, or to the Tsar and the Kaiser about the state of Europe. Paradoxically enough, during those critical months of the autumn of 1901 and the early part of 1902, the King and his German nephew appeared to those watching the game most closely to be on better terms than the ministers or press of the two countries. Now it was no case of Lady Warwick's using her good offices to bring together royal relatives. Rather it behooved the King to ride Mr. Joseph Chamberlain on the snaffle, and the Kaiser to prevent Count von Bülow from snapping back at the British Colonial Secretary. Neither was able, or willing, to attempt this, and Europe watched the spectacle of two great peoples goaded to fury by their politicians and their press without really knowing or caring what all the pother was about.

Far above these white horses of public opinion stood the King and his nephew. The one, for all his griefs, remained loyal to his blood, never forgot that the Kaiser was his sister's son, sent him, indeed, for the Christmas of 1901 a present of a Highland dress that had belonged to his father, the Emperor Frederick, which had come to light during the turning out at Windsor Castle, and wrote him a letter testifying to his "affection and friendship." The Kaiser, not less forthcoming, recalled that the last time he had worn a kilt was nearly twenty-five years ago, piously referred to the family bereavements they had both suffered within the twelve-month, thanked God that he was in time "to be near you and Aunts" at his Grandmother's death, and unfeignedly admired the "magnificent realm" over which King Edward reigned. He added: —

I gladly reciprocate all you say about the relations of our two countries and the personal ones; they are of the same blood and they have the same creed and they belong to the great Teutonic race which Heaven has entrusted with the culture of the world; for apart from the Eastern races there is no other race left for God to work His will in and upon the world except ours, that is, I think, grounds enough to keep Peace and to foster *mutual* recognition and *reciprocity* in all that draws us together and to sink everything which could part us. The Press is awful on both sides, but here it has nothing to say, for I am sole master and arbiter of German foreign policy, and the Government and country *must* follow me even if I have to "face the musik."

Poor Kaiser! He might have had, as Prince Metternich observed, "more brains in his little finger than King Edward in the whole of his body," but this was the kind of letter which helped to persuade his uncle that he was an *énergumène*, a man whose reflexes denoted the neuropath, a man, in short, who was not to be trusted. How could one safely enter into an alliance, which anyhow ran against all the traditions of British policy, with a man who regarded God as

his sleeping partner? So when the King read Lord Lansdowne's account of the conversation with Metternich at which the German Ambassador acidly offered for the last time an alliance that was to secure peace for half a century, he minuted: "The King does not consider the language and arguments made use of by the German Ambassador as at all satisfactory." Was Prince Metternich's attitude his own, or had he assumed it on his master's orders? There lay the difficulty in dealing with the Kaiser. He believed that he led, whereas all the time he was taking his direction from someone or other whispering in his ear. King Edward had suffered too long from the mischief-makers round his nephew to be under any illusions on that point.

*Tout savoir.* . . . Herr Ludwig has put in a plea of exculpation on the ground of that stunted arm which hung, a perpetual goad to self-assertion, a thing to mock the war lord of the greatest military engine in history, an impediment in all royal sports, a disability even at the card table if his uncle desired to teach him bridge. Others who knew William II well scoff at the theory that it was the overcoming of this handicap which carried him beyond the normal, made him too assertive, too clever, a perpetual victim of hypersensitive nerves. Sometimes the manifestations of it had their ridiculous side. When his uncle's guest at Sandringham, he turned to the King, who was showing him his latest car, and asked: "What oil do you use? Petrol?" The King, a keen motorist, but sharing the common ignorance of 1902 on the mysteries of the new horseless vehicles, did not know, and the Kaiser's recommendation of potato spirit left the King uninterested. Towards the end of the visit a collection of bottles appeared on the King's table. The royal wonder resolved itself into huffiness when the Kaiser explained that he had sent for them posthaste from Germany so that he might demonstrate the nature of this synthetic gasoline in which Germany hoped to do a big business.

Yet if the Kaiser's cleverness was merely superficial, he had men who knew how to serve him, as the King learned to his annoyance when the end of the South African War was in sight. Discussions were proceeding between the Boer delegates on the one side and Lords Kitchener and Milner on the other. When the April of 1902 was drawing to its close, the King prophesied that peace would be concluded within three weeks, though he did not know the terms laid down by the British negotiators. Suddenly he received a telegram from the Kaiser congratulating him on the liberal peace conditions offered to the Boers, conditions which the Kaiser had learned from a "private channel." The King asked Lord Salisbury what it meant and what the terms were. The Prime Minister confessed his own ignorance, and Sir Frank Lascelles was deputed to wait upon the Kaiser and ask for details. That imperial oracle was quite obliging, and, what was more, his information proved perfectly accurate. Things had come to a pretty pass when the British Government had to rely for information on such a matter from the head of a foreign state.

But by April 1902, nothing that the Kaiser could do, or say, had any real influence on British foreign policy. The die had then been cast. Not an Anglo-German understanding, but an Entente with France, was to be the mould determining the shape of the new Europe. The decisive moment in the initiation of the immense revolution has been placed on the night of February 8, 1902; the place was Marlborough House, the occasion a state banquet. Whilst the King's guests were drinking coffee and smoking their cigars, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain and M. Cambon, the French Ambassador, slipped away together to the billiard room, where years before the Prince had amused himself with his chosen spirits, the friends of "Guelpho the Gay." The two statesmen talked with animation for exactly twenty-eight minutes. Baron von Eckardstein timed them, and, though

he was unable to do much eavesdropping, he caught the words "Egypt" and "Morocco." It was enough. Later in the evening, when the guests were departing and Von Eckardstein was summoned to the King's study, the German diplomat listened without surprise to the King's remark that the abuse of England in the German press and Count Bülow's unfriendly remarks in the Reichstag had put out of the question Great Britain and Germany's "working together in any conceivable matter." "We are being urged," he continued, "more strongly than ever by France to come to an agreement with her in all Colonial disputes, and it will probably be best in the end to make such a settlement, because England only wants peace and quiet and to live on friendly footing with all other countries." And he ended the conversation by repeating that England wanted peace for herself and for the world.

So was born the child whose coming King Edward had awaited with such patience. The puny infant underwent many vicissitudes; until the King's visit to Paris in 1903 it could hardly be said to be alive at all. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance gave it a shock when it was a week or two old. France, pursuing logic where the duller Englishman moves laboriously from one thing to the next, regretted that agreement, "as it made more remote the prospect of a good understanding between Great Britain and Russia." M. Cambon's words to Lord Lansdowne left the King unrepentant, for he welcomed the agreement "as naturally interfering with Russia's views and possible action." But the French were right. The Entente was not completed till it embraced Russia and so introduced a firebrand into a Europe where the fearful pursuit of peace, coupled with the voracious appetite of the Edwardian world for markets, led to a result far different from the hopes King Edward expressed to his friend in the German Diplomatic Service on that February night of 1902.

## XVI

### KINGCRAFT IN A DEMOCRACY

WHETHER King Edward was, or was not, the chief architect of the Entente, of which indeed only the foundations had as yet been laid, his personal intervention in foreign affairs arose from the views he held on the nature and responsibilities of his office. Whatever misunderstandings his lightness of social touch had created, whatever suggestions of moral flippancy these had mistakenly aroused, his attitude of intense seriousness in all that touched the essentials of his vocation remained unshaken. He never, like Charles II, allowed jests even remotely inciting laughter about the royal office. Convenience, and no desire to parody court ceremonial, — such as used to inspire Buckingham and Rochester when they strutted about with the fire irons before the delighted Charles, impersonating his orb-and-sceptre-bearing officers of state who belonged to an older and strait-laced generation, — caused King Edward to shock Lord Pembroke, his Lord Steward, who had gone to Buckingham Palace to inquire whether it would be convenient for the King to receive an address and found the King occupied in the homely occupation of having his corns cut. Lord Pembroke stated his business. "Have you the address with you?" asked the King. The Lord Steward had the address but not his wand, and, like Mercury, he could do nothing without it. But the King made light of the difficulty. "Oh, never mind," he said, "take an umbrella." So in a punctilious Court was ritual sometimes precariously maintained.

Rather, perhaps, should one call this the action of a convinced ritualist, able to perceive symbolism in what others



of less robust faith would only find subject for laughter. He took infinite pains that the order of which kingship is the outward and visible sign should be meticulously reflected in the ceremonial of his Court, an ideal of courtesy, in the true sense of the word, that he extended to other planes. Very angry was he when unwittingly he himself transgressed. A historic instance occurred at the Requiem Mass held for the assassinated King Carlos of Portugal. The royal *prie-dieu* of necessity had to be placed in advance of the rest of the congregation, where it was awkward for him to determine by observing others when precisely to make those changes in deportment which the service demands. He foresaw this difficulty and arranged that Lord Acton, a Roman Catholic and one of his Lords in Waiting, should, by exception, be placed in front; when Lord Acton knelt, the King would kneel; when he stood, the King would stand — and in this way all possibility of error be avoided. But it happened during the service that Lord Acton dropped his handkerchief. He stooped to pick it up and the King, taking his cue, stooped also. It was a serious lapse on the part of a courtier, and from that time, when anyone dropped a handkerchief at King Edward's Court, it remained on the ground.

Nothing escaped his observation. Like the trained musician who grasps the whole import of a symphony whilst his ears pick out a hundred strands in the musical texture which others miss, he took in at once the sweep of a ceremonial pageant and the smallest details of personal attire. To pursue the comparison, he loved the niceties of uniforms and decorations as did a Johann Sebastian Bach the ornaments, the glittering jewels of his clavier pieces, the mordent, the turn, the *pralltriller*, which we slipshod moderns so rudely omit. It hurt him to see an Order, a decoration, even a button, misplaced. When he watched a film of his own coronation, the picture of himself drew the remark: "Decorations on the wrong side" — a serious indictment of the new art.

His eyes saw everything. It is recorded how, at the opening of the Law Courts, the Duke of Teck, Queen Mary's father, wore for the first time the full dress of a Colonel, the rank he had been given for his services in the Arabi Campaign. The Prince of Wales, as he then was, whilst chatting after the ceremony with his usual bonhomie, suddenly assumed "the fixed look" that came over his features when something displeased him. Momentary wonder at the cause of the royal disapproval was explained when he said: "Francis has got the wrong buttons."

It was sometimes necessary to use tact, especially with foreign diplomats in error over their own Orders. The story goes how the Swedish Count de Bille, much beloved and the *doyen* of the Ministers, showed a fine carelessness that worried the King: how to put him straight afforded a nice problem in the handling of an Envoy Extraordinary's dignity. But King Edward achieved his end with a masterly politeness. Bidding him good-night at the end of some court function, he added confidentially, "Hunt & Roskill, 148, Piccadilly," and the Count, on visiting the court jewelers, discovered what was wrong.

The Americans were past worrying over; one never knew where sartorial license would lead them, and their ideas about breeches and trousers, frock coats and morning coats, revolved in a perpetual state of republican flux. But when his own subjects fell under such influences he could convey rebuke under the guise of humor. Lord Rosebery, appearing at Windsor Castle in plain clothes and knee breeches, when the command had gone forth for full dress and trousers, was greeted by the King: "I presume you have come in the suite of the American Ambassador." Sir Almeric Fitzroy, who has recorded this royal pleasantry, does not add whether Lord Rosebery had any answer with which to parry it. But Lord Fisher was not at a loss when he appeared one day at court in some disgracefully old

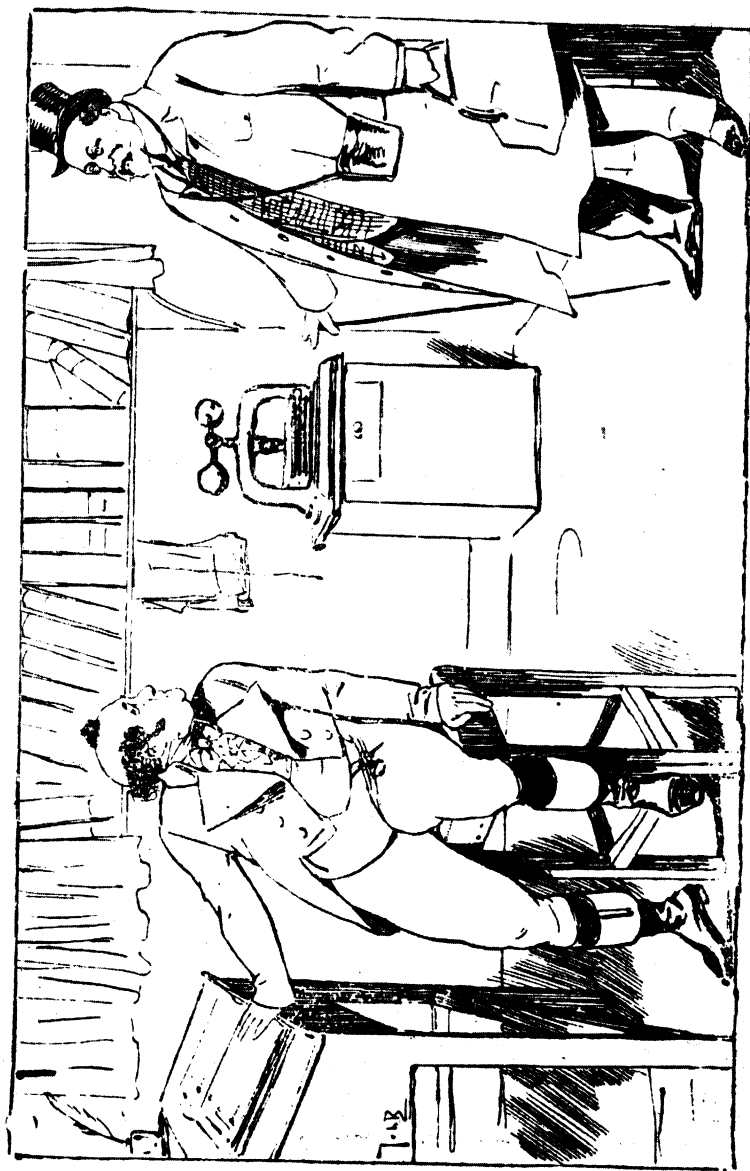
clothes. "Rear-ly, Fisher," said the King, characteristically rolling his *r*'s, "that is a ver-ry old suit you are wearing." "Yes, Sir," came the instant reply, "but you've always told me that nothing really matters but the cut." It pleased King Edward that the greatest English sailor since Nelson should show in the arts of the courtier the quickness that his Admiral postulated as the seaman's first quality in the war for which the navy was indefatigably preparing.

In 1906 the formation of the Liberal Ministry caused some momentary anxiety, and not only at court did speculation turn on the likelihood of its left-wing members maintaining their protestant attitude in the matter of dress. The wheel of change had gone full circle since John Burns, the fiery Trade-Unionist, had led the unemployed to riot in Mayfair and smash the windows of Bond Street shops. Now that he was a Cabinet Minister, people looked upon him as a touchstone. If he bowed to orthodoxy and appeared in the gold lace and cocked hat of a Privy Councilor's uniform, Mr. Lloyd George would surely do likewise. At the swearing-in he created rather a bad impression by attending, not in the conventional frock coat, but in the short blue double-breasted reefer jacket that he habitually wore. King Edward, however, always partial to the man who had risen from the ranks, — Mr. Salteena, some will remember, only excited His Royal Highness's suspicion so long as he tried to hide the fact that his "poor father" was a butcher, — knew better than to hurry, or harry, his President of the Local Government Board, and the royal patience was justified, for Mr. John Burns, who frankly explained that he had learned some of the secrets of dandyism during a boyhood when he was a page boy in Mayfair, soon had the satisfaction of being the best-dressed man in the Cabinet. We see the King not only congratulating him on the fit of his uniform, but before long actually proud of the distinction which the old Trade-Unionist gave to his Court. A natural genius in wearing his, and

other people's, clothes — a useful talent for any politician — enabled him to attain this position. Once, commanded to dine and sleep at Windsor, Mr. Burns forgot to pack his waistcoat. The discovery of this omission did not disturb him. Without any false modesty, he could say to the footman, "Have you the ditto to that white waistcoat?" and in these borrowed plumes draw from the royal lips as he presented himself: "As usual, the best-dressed man here."

Majesty, which is the fount of honor, is always aware of the influence it exerts on those who set their sails in its waters, and Mr. John Burns, if he had not outlived his salad days when he was green in judgment and red in opinion, — for this attractive figure in the British Socialist Movement never lost his parochial outlook in politics, — could now submit to the awe that surrounds kingship the more easily since the King flattered his honest self-esteem. Many were the anecdotes that told of the pleasure he took in basking in the royal sunshine. The story of how Mr. Augustine Birrell, seeing the success of Burns's treatment and slyly asking him how he should manage the conversation when his own turn came to speak with the King, received the answer, "Give him his head, give him his head," is capped by Mr. John Burns's description of another interview: "Oh! Him and me got on first-rate. I was in my best form." The delightful profession must have had an infinite spice for the King at moments like these when a sincere and sturdy proletarian ate out of his hand, and Mr. Lloyd George showed chagrin that he did not enjoy the King's favor in the same measure as his colleague.

Yet *grand, nobile, et délicieux* as the profession was, the grim figure of Death stood always very near. Within two years it had carried off his brother Alfred, his eldest sister, and his mother. A fortnight before he was to be crowned it seemed about to take him also. He bore with stoical endurance the agonizing pain which the appendix is able to refer



A HOSTILE DUTCH CARTOON ENTITLED "THE UNCLE OF EUROPE"

JOHN BULL: "WELL! BEEN WORKING HARD?"

KING EDWARD: "NO. BUT AMUSING MYSELF . . . COLOSSALLY."



to other parts of the body. It was a chill, he thought, which would pass; at any rate he must carry on, whatever the cost. When Sir Francis Laking, the royal physician, desired to call in Sir Frederick Treves, who raised appendicitis to an unrivaled and fashionable position in Edwardian pathology, the King was furious. But the autocrat who commanded his doctor to leave the room had to yield before the diagnosis that counseled an immediate operation. So sudden was this that, when the King came to, he was disturbed by the sound of hammering — in the elaborate routine of the Court, the orders countermanding the Coronation had not yet reached the workmen engaged in putting up the stands.

The King's life trembled in the balance whilst the crowds in the streets of London sauntered about with a "bored insensibility" very different from the poignancy of their grief eight years later when King Edward had given the new democracy a lesson in the meaning of kingship. But his recovery belied the doctors' fears, and within seven weeks he had passed through the stages of convalescence and was back again in London for the "most solemn and important event" of his coronation.

The prayers of my people for my recovery were heard; and now I offer up my deepest gratitude to Divine Providence for having preserved my life and given me strength to fulfil the important duties which devolve on me as Sovereign of this great Empire.

This was how he ended the message headed "To my People" which he had himself composed. He meant every word of it. The ceremony at the Abbey was not for him any archaic survival of outworn ritual.

On that dull morning of August 9, 1902, King Edward at last became what the training of a lifetime had prepared him to be. No Saul was ever dedicated younger to his vocation; all through his life, through his solemn youth, his high-spirited early manhood, through his prime, too, with its

strange vicissitudes, he had never for a moment felt reluctance at the thought of the responsibilities that would one day be his. Now as he was anointed and set amongst the "kings, priests and prophets of Israel"; as he was robed and accoutred with the symbols of chivalry; and lastly as the Crown of Saint Edward was placed upon his head, his majesty stood complete. Through the tremendous ordeal the King passed without faltering or any apparent fatigue. The anxiety felt by those who took part in the service was rather for the Archbishop of Canterbury, then in the extremity of age, so old that he could hardly see and could hardly stand, so weak that more than once he looked likely to faint. But a brother prelate trying to assist him was met with the old fire that made this Victorian schoolmaster-archbishop treat his suffragans like fourth-form boys. "Go away," he snapped, "it is n't my head, it 's my legs." Dean Bradley, too, who in virtue of his office had the privilege of offering the cup when the King communicated, tottered in his senility and almost fell with the chalice. A grave accident seemed imminent as he held it out in his trembling hands.

Yet the weakness of the Archbishop afforded the King the opportunity of a gesture that remained in the minds of the congregation as the high point of the ceremony. The Archbishop knelt to do homage, having, as the head of the lords, spiritual precedence in this even of the Prince of Wales, but was unable to rise until the King leaned forward and, taking hold of his hands, helped him on to his feet with marks of affection moving to those who witnessed the act. And when the Prince of Wales came next, offering his homage by the traditional method of touching the King's crown with his right hand and kissing him on the left cheek, the King with infinite tenderness drew his only surviving son into his arms, a spontaneous gesture of fatherly love contrasting with the calculated pomp of the rest of the ceremonial, to which none could be insensible.



It was one thing to be crowned King; another to see that his ministers maintained the same loyalty as himself to the conventions of the constitution, that they did not, either from nonchalance or of set purpose, whittle away the prerogatives of the Crown. Yet it stands out as a paradox of the reign that, whilst King Edward's influence over national opinion consistently grew, so that he came to tower above the petty figures in public life "where lack of leadership, either in church or state, was never so deplorably manifest,"<sup>1</sup> he had to yield on every point in which he considered his traditional powers were being infringed. More paradoxical still, the Conservative Ministry proved the greater offender in this respect. Conservatism owes little enough to Lord Balfour, who proved a poor party leader, unable either to secure the cohesion of his ministry or to speak a language understood by the people. But the most serious charge which posterity may bring against this superb dilettante, who in the words of a fellow member of his Cabinet could never forget that 20,000 years ago there was an ice age and that in 20,000 years' time England would lie beneath the glaciers of another, was his attitude of suspicion towards the royal prerogative. Instead of conceiving it his duty to preserve those of its functions that remained, against the time when they would act as a shield for a vast electorate preyed upon by its demagogues, we find him upholding the powers of ministers and of the majority in the House of Commons as these came into conflict with the once clearly admitted powers of the Crown. As a courtier<sup>2</sup> put it, the King to Mr. Balfour was "just one of those irritating factors in general politics which you cannot ignore and which you must treat with dismal and fictitious solemnity."

Previous to 1890, the right of the Crown to cede or acquire territory had been undisputed, but in that year a dangerous precedent was set by Lord Salisbury over the question of

<sup>1</sup> Sir Almeric Fitzroy.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Lionel Cust.

Heligoland. Had he treated it as an executive matter, to be carried through by a formal act of the Queen in Council, the royal assent would have remained a reality and would almost certainly not have been given. But by embodying that action of dubious wisdom in a Parliamentary Bill to which the Queen could not refuse sanction except by use of the obsolete veto, he circumvented the royal opposition. With Mr. Gladstone's protests at such an usurpation of the Crown's rights the Prince of Wales had cordially agreed. Now, as King, he felt legitimate anger when Mr. Balfour loftily proposed to follow the same course over the Anglo-French Treaty of 1904, citing as precedent in his favor the solitary instance of his uncle's action in the case of Heligoland. When in the House of Commons Mr. Balfour asserted that "there can be no cession of any territory of His Majesty's without the consent of Parliament," the *Times* took to task the Prime Minister, who repeated his assertion, for making "no casual slip." "It is strange," it said, "that a minister of the Crown could fall into such an error," and it pointed out how odd it was that the very person who fourteen years before had been largely responsible for formulating such a doctrine should now "seem to have completely forgotten that it can claim no greater antiquity and that it is largely his own offspring."

To the King, at the time in Copenhagen, the faithful Lord Knollys — a Liberal always ready to have a smack at a Tory minister — at once telegraphed, pointing out the Premier's violation of constitutional practice and referring in support to the article in the *Times*. "I entirely agree with you," replied the King, "that Mr. Balfour has treated me with slight courtesy. . . . He is always so vague that probably he is wrong, but I must insist, if he is, and as a matter of principle, that he *admits* it." The Premier's habitual state of philosophic doubt, however, did not stretch as far as the admission wished for by the King, and Mr. Asquith went one

better five years later when the King was informed of the Cabinet's decision to evacuate Somaliland without even being told of the reasons that led up to it. Thanks to these instances, a Ministry with a majority in the House of Commons to-day could legally cede Singapore to Japan or Jamaica to the United States if it could maintain itself long enough in office to override the suspensory power of the House of Lords.

Two other high prerogatives of the Crown were brushed aside by Mr. Balfour when he carried his point that the Ministry of the day could insist on a dissolution if it commanded the support of the House of Commons. And his thesis that the Prime Minister could choose or dismiss ministers without reference to the Sovereign has its corollary in the letters exchanged between Mr. Trevelyan and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, where the one describes himself as "your minister of Education" and the other replies, "I will relieve you of your office without delay." Two months later, on May Day 1931, King George's Prime Minister with even greater sublimity declared in a public speech, "We shall appoint new peers . . ." thus assuming not only the royal prerogative but also the royal style of the first person plural. How Mr. Gladstone would have gasped at such language!

Yet this is only carrying a step further the attack on the King's discretion in the creation of peers, made first by the Conservatives and then by the Liberals, both of whom considered the right to be vested in the Prime Minister of the day. If the reason given by Edward Legge<sup>1</sup> for the sudden resignation of Lord Salisbury is true, he left office rather than do anything to muddy the fount of honor. "That, Sir, is impossible," he replied "simply and calmly" when the King mentioned the name of one of those whom he wished to be included amongst the new peers in the Coronation honors list. "I wish him to be given a peerage and he must have

<sup>1</sup> In his *King George V and the Royal Family*.

it," the King said, and by way of answer Lord Salisbury resigned. This story of a royal apologist lacks corroboration, although it is of a piece with Lord Salisbury's independence of character, and in any case stands in agreeable contrast to the levity with which his successors, particularly Mr. Lloyd George, contaminated the stream.

Such encroachments, by the Prime Ministers and the Cabinet, whilst bringing their nemesis in the decadence of parliamentary government which is the outstanding feature in contemporary English political life, did nothing to minimize the real influence of the King, who had, however, to deal not only with deliberate filchings of his prerogative. Ministers were often slack in keeping him informed of things which he had the right to know, and at one time or another many of them aroused his displeasure. When Mr. George Wyndham gave the post of Under-Secretary in his department to Sir Antony Macdonnell, he failed to acquaint the King of his appointment. This serious lapse drew upon the Irish Secretary a royal reprimand, and that candid and wholly charming man made matters worse by excusing himself on the ground that he had so much to do. "The excuses of the ministers are often as gauche as their omissions," the King dryly commented.

Mr. Balfour himself set no good example. It annoyed the King when the Prime Minister made a public speech on the larger issues of domestic politics and imperial defense without having previously informed him of his intentions, and Mr. Balfour received a letter testifying to the surprise, and even pain, which his action had caused to his sovereign. A still more glaring instance occurred when Mr. Balfour informed the House of Commons that the Government intended to establish a naval base at Rosyth — of which the King at the time knew nothing. The oversight was worse since the King took his responsibilities as head of the fighting services very seriously indeed. Neither Lord Selborne

at the Admiralty nor Mr. Arnold Foster, who never attained the King's confidence whilst he was Secretary of State for War, reached the standard he demanded. They did things without his knowledge, or submitted decisions for his approval at the last moment when he had no time to study them. On this ground we find him refusing to give his assent to an Admiralty Memorandum on promotion, and Mr. Arnold Foster felt "some concern" when the King, who had not received the reports of the Army Council meetings, pointed out that during the late Queen's reign not a step was taken at the War Office without her being informed of what was going on, and hoped the same course would be pursued with him.

Yet the machine, with all its contradictions, worked easily enough as a rule, and the King, though he was happier on the whole with his Liberal ministers and found Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman more congenial than Mr. Balfour, appreciated the Conservative Leader's skill in argument and his amusing reports of Cabinet meetings. It was easier to be irritated at Mr. Balfour's dialectic since his vagueness — the Platonic half lights in which his metaphysical Cambridge training was apt to set every question — interfered with that clear-cut decision of judgment which is the essence of government. What, for instance, did he really mean about Tariff Reform? He had lost from his Ministry both Joseph Chamberlain on the one hand and the Free Traders, the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, and Lord Ritchie, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the other. In domestic politics the King, whom we have seen during his mother's lifetime striving to prevent the Crown from showing any bias, stood aloof. His own attitude towards the social order can best be described as that of an equalitarian who liked titles and considered wealth a rough test of a man's merit — the compromise of the average man. But he coupled this with the motto of *richesse oblige*. The rich

should pay. Far from bringing about such a desirable end, which the Victorians had skillfully avoided, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain's scheme looked as if it would increase the burdens on the poor. So the King one night at the opera, talking of the new Motor Bill which introduced taxes on the "horseless vehicles" amounting to as much as four pounds per annum on those of the highest power, declared he thoroughly approved of it and was all in favor of taxing the rich. The opportunity was too good for Free Trade ex-ministers who were present.

"Your Majesty," asked Lord Ritchie, "does not then approve of taxing the food of the poor?"

"No," replied the King, "and I don't care who knows it." Whereupon the Duke of Devonshire is said to have turned to Lord Balfour and said *sotto voce*: "We must really get this man on the stump." Why did not Mr. Balfour make it plain what he really proposed to do in this vital matter?

There was one sphere, however, in which dialectical subtlety could not enable him to escape from the King's displeasure, and then quickness of another kind was needed. To the bridge table King Edward brought the royal love of acquisitiveness and the princely desire to lead which neither the cards nor his modicum of skill could always gratify. When invested with the autocracy which bridge gives to him who plays the hand, he could sometimes shine. Otherwise he had no sense where the unseen cards lay and was in general an unlucky card holder, if this exception to the universal law of chance can be maintained even of a king. As dummy he had no mercy upon a partner who allowed things to go wrong, and an evening when the rubbers fell to his opponents drove his spirits down to zero, so that in the loss of his "good temper and countenance" the atmosphere grew unpleasantly chilly. At Balmoral on one such occasion he lost the last game of the third successive rubber owing to a bad declaration by Mr. Balfour. But the Prime Minister

extricated himself from a position indefensible with argument by saying: "Sir, there remains but one thing to be done. Please send me to bed."

Chaff, the playful form of anger, was ever a ready weapon, to be used indifferently at the bridge table or the council board. Here, when fulfilling the functions of the high executive of the government, the King was perfectly sure of his feelings. He might show irritation if he suspected any bureaucratic attempt to rush things through the council in a hurry or to treat its work as a mere matter of form. It is on record how Mr. Joseph Chamberlain annoyed him when, too conscious of his importance, he took it upon himself to play a leading rôle at one of its meetings. But in general the royal dignity took no notice of such petty improprieties as Lord Cholmondeley was guilty of when he sat through a council with his hands in his pockets, chewing a toothpick. Even Mr. Labouchere's bad manners on being sworn passed apparently unobserved. The too-self-conscious Radical, who for his part had always defended the Prince against his traducers, "studiously refrained" from kissing the Testament and throughout the ceremony indulged in remarks under his breath. The King, who must have heard them, probably excused Labby's conduct as being a case of inverted respect for the royal office on the part of one determined to show himself unaffected by any such feelings of awe as others experienced upon their admission.

Sometimes this sentiment led to the verge of absurdity. When the aged Lord Suffield began repeating certain of the formulæ used at the Council, the initiates, thinking that this was part of the ritual, followed his lead until it sounded as if the members were rehearsing a Litany, and the King, beckoning to Lord Althorp, had to bid him tell "Uncle Charles" to be quiet. These and other pictures have been left us by Sir Almeric Fitzroy, pictures of the King in his Council, now being mirthful over the efforts of the Duke of

Devonshire — of whom a witty woman said that his ideas turned to potatoes in his mouth — to pronounce the Indian names in a Report of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, now, as he pricked the sheriffs in accordance with a practice that went back to the early Middle Ages, commenting in a running fire on the individuals chosen from the squirarchy to fill these unpaid and unsought posts in the old shire administrations. We see him with his own holiday program arranged, bantering ministers on the chances of a prorogation; or showing "marked distinction" to Mr. Winston Churchill when this son of his old friend was sworn; or felicitously welcoming the Premier of Cape Colony on his admission to the Council; or in spite of himself yielding to the courtier-like importunity of Archbishop Davidson, who managed to obtain an audience after one Council by asking after the royal health and so obliged the King to keep him back in conversation for a few minutes.

Thus formality and informality went hand in hand, the old ritual of words and forms setting off what might have seemed a board meeting called by the Magnate-King who presided over the greatest and most flourishing Corporation on the globe. His subjects, bemused by the wealth which the world poured into the lap of Edwardian England, liked to think of him in this rôle. There have been many personifications of kingship as it has been conceived throughout the generations: Elizabeth, in a swashbuckling age, keeping herself inviolate as she also kept her realm; the Christian mildness of a Henry VI, type of the mediæval scholar; the romantic valor of the Troubadour King, Richard Cœur de Lion; Louis XIV, leading with majestic mien the parade of velveted and bewigged courtiers as he raised the art of polite living to heights never before known. Now in the heyday of high finance, King Edward, "for money under his auspices began to talk and not always in the purest English," stood as the ideal of the King-Financier, his air of prosperity and



well-being set off by the frock coat and the silk hat (still current in Threadneedle Street) which so well became the stout royal figure. So long as he remained to direct the affairs of the nation with his easy and unaffected bonhomie, nothing would go very wrong. How different was the atmosphere he created to the heel-clicking, sword-clanking environment of the Kaiser's court! Yet King Edward could never quite subdue the love for uniforms, which was a pleasing weakness in the dour heart of the Victorian male. And once, brooding over the splendors of his nephew's entourage, he sent forth the fiat that Privy Councilors should attend meetings of the Council in uniform, an action attributed by the Clerk of that august body "entirely to the effect of three days' residence in Berlin."

## XVII

### ANNUS MIRABILIS

THE confidence which the King won from his subjects was no child of flattery or obsequiousness. If it sprang from the general belief in the goodness of his heart and the soundness of his common sense, — which is much the same thing, — it derived additional strength from the resource, energy, and courage showed in 1903, the *annus mirabilis* of his reign. Until then he had to mark time. The period of mourning for his mother, the South African War, the Coronation, and his serious illness had all stood in the way. Thus two years went by and England still lay under the shadow of its Victorian past. In Europe it had no friend, being universally disliked for its bad diplomatic manners and its *morgue*, which was thought to be reflected in the arrogance of the Englishman and the dowdiness of the Englishwoman, as they traveled over a Continent not yet annexed by American tourists. In the beginning of the Edwardian era the English “miss,” with her projecting teeth and gawky figure, still symbolized for the foreign journalists the beautiful, if not artless, daughters whose loveliness was enough for a Keats.

The Victorians consoled themselves for being unloved by the reflection that they had at least friends in God and Mammon. Perhaps the observation recorded some twenty years before this by a diplomatist who took a leading part in the epic of the King’s reign had now become out of date, but doubtless many still agreed with Lord Carnock that what had saved England from the loose, immoral mode of thought so prevalent among the Latin races was the great power exer-

cised by the Church of England. Against such a background it was not difficult for the Englishman to call the isolation in which his nation stood "splendid." King Edward, who had often enough complained of the crustiness of Lord Salisbury, knew better than to allow such cant to pass. He knew we "were isolated because we were unpopular and unpopular because we were rude." The handfuls of sand that British ministers had thrown into the bearings of international diplomacy could not but heat the bearings; the best lubricant to make them run sweetly was good manners. And King Edward, though no man was more thoroughly aware that good international relations depend upon the elimination of conflicting interests, determined to prove what his kingly conception of good manners could effect. He made up his mind to show Europe that the Englishman was not the dour, angular personality he was generally supposed to be; or if he could not do that, he would prove that the King of England could cut a figure just as fine, and a good deal more human, than the Emperor of Germany, who had hitherto enjoyed a monopoly of traveling about Europe in state. In a word, he planned a foreign tour on which he should pay visits to some of his brothers in the craft whilst surrounded by all the pomp and circumstance that befitted the King of England. It should be a gesture inducing Europe, and for Europe we may substitute France without materially limiting King Edward's intentions, to revise its accepted opinion of the Englishman. And once this was done, the schemes for the Entente — which, since the momentary flash of inspiration at the King's dinner table, had again seemed to lapse, — might be pursued to their serious end.

Paris was the King's real objective, but it had to be masked, for the Parisians, however anxious leading French statesmen might be to effect a reconciliation between the two countries, were still sore and angry at the perfidious egoism of British world policy, still suffering from their pro-Boer

fever. King Edward, therefore, with the skill of a master-strategist, prepared his assault on Paris, not from the north, which French eyes scanned with suspicion, but from the south, from the Mediterranean and from the very home of that Latin culture which the Frenchman in his café thought to be everywhere threatened by Teutonic or, what was spiritually the same thing, by Anglo-Saxon pressure.

It was a scheme after the King's own heart, combining pleasure and affairs and all the more agreeable in anticipation because he could plan the first steps without taking anyone's advice, except that of the Marquis de Soveral. Even so scrupulous a constitutional sovereign as King Edward could decide on his own initiative that he owed it to his health to take a spring cruise in the Mediterranean. The rest followed naturally. To visit his cousin, King Carlos of Portugal, was a gesture of friendship for England's oldest ally and a mark of regard for his own closest friend, the Don Juanesque Marquis. It would emphasize Great Britain's enormous interests in the Mediterranean, then almost an English lake and bearing on its waters the finest warships of the British navy, if he called at Gibraltar and Malta accompanied by the fleet. On his way home he would leave the *Victoria and Albert* at Naples, pay a state visit to the King of Italy in Rome, not omitting at the same time to see the Pope, and thence take train for home. Nothing could be more natural than to spend a day or two in Paris, and a forty years' acquaintance with the Parisians made him confident he could draw them out of their ill-humor. This was the plan that he laid before his ministers.

The King's belief in himself, however, hardly extended to Lord Lansdowne, who received the project dubiously, seeing much possible harm in it. The temper of the Parisians was still notoriously Anglophobe. Could the King count on a cordial or even a respectful reception at their hands? The Foreign Secretary, as he put the question, had already in his

own mind provided the answer, and when he timidly told the French Ambassador of the King's proposal, he qualified the visit as "quite an informal affair." M. Cambon, soon to become one of the chief artificers of the Entente, said not very encouragingly that the President would at least have to ask the King to dinner, but he passed on the information to M. Delcassé, the real stalwart amongst French politicians for an Anglo-French understanding, who thought the best thing to do was to find out the King's own views about his visit. The answer he received from Sir Edmund Monson — who, like Lord Lyons twenty-five years before, believed that the Parisians in their actual temper were better avoided — left the matter in no doubt. The King said he desired to be received as officially as possible and that the more honors that were paid to him, the better it would be. In a word, he was ready to stake his reputation on his ability to win over the Parisians. He had done this before; and he would confound the fears of ministers and ambassadors again.

The earlier stages of that five weeks' progress succeeded in awakening public opinion to the fact that a personality of hitherto unsuspected powers had arrived to play a part in the arena of international affairs. The amiability and the chic which Europe had associated with the Prince of Wales were still characteristic of the King of England, whilst age and the great dignity he now bore, if they had tempered his Bohemianism, had added a finesse equally notable whether attributed to candor or cunning. Henceforth, King Edward was to be loved or feared; not even the Kaiser could afford to indulge in the smile of conscious superiority. The Portuguese, formerly full of apprehensions, now glowed with fervor at King Edward's "golden words," as he assured them that the integrity and preservation of their colonies, on which they had suspected Victorian statesmen of casting lustful eyes, stood as one of his dearest aims. Here, too, was an insurance against the covetous designs that Germany nourished against

their rather shabby, but to them still grand, empire. To back the soothing words of the English King was the accomplished technique of the future Lord Hardinge, ablest of the rising generation of Foreign Office officials, a man with strokes all round the diplomatic wicket, a master of detail, immovable and yet supple, never losing sight of his objective, and even proof against the charm of the Kaiser as they discussed high policy together seated side by side on the imperial billiard table at Homburg. King Edward, in choosing Charles Hardinge for his expert adviser when he became the peripatetic master-diplomatist, showed his usual perspicacity in the matter of his entourage.

After this auspicious prelude in Lisbon, King Edward went to Gibraltar, where the pessimism of the military experts about protecting the harbor of that European bastion against batteries on the Spanish hills drew from him the opinion that the happiest solution of the difficulty would be to remain at peace. This, and not war, was the goal, and he advanced a step nearer to it when he sent the fleet across to Algiers to salute President Loubet, then visiting that Provence of modern France. The President, susceptible to the prestige of the British Navy, which was never absent from the calculations of European statesmen between Trafalgar and the Washington Conference, gracefully accepted the compliment and hoped that he might soon have the honor of seeing the King and of thanking him in person. The ground was being prepared. And when the King heard that, in addition to his official reception by the President, the French Jockey Club were getting up a special race meeting in his honor, he might feel that his confidence would be justified.

But Rome came first, to be reached via Malta. So sympathetic did the devout inhabitants of that island find their sovereign that they decided he must be a Catholic like themselves — a belief which not they alone of the King's subjects

cherished. In Rome, however, it was not the King's visit to the aged Leo XIII, whose political memory ran back to a Europe which lay outside even King Edward's experience, but his reception by the King of Italy that focused European attention. This limping member of the Triple Alliance became not less suspect to Berlin and Vienna when King Edward, toasting his host at the Quirinal, recalled the days of the Crimean War, when the soldiers of the two countries had fought side by side. And though he meant what he said when he declared that he was certain another occasion would not present itself, the passing of little more than ten years was to afford a proof of the unreliability of political prophecies. Not that the Romans in their eternal city worried about the future as, flattered by the King of England's visit, these connoisseurs of princes spread abroad the story of his charm and flair for doing and saying the right thing, whether at the Quirinal or the Vatican. The Uncle of Europe legend was already spreading as the train bore a tired King Edward northwards to Paris and the real objective of his journey.

It could not succeed — such was the opinion of the German Ambassador in Paris as he summed up the pros and the cons for the benefit of his chief, Count von Bülow. Rather than to an Entente, the visit would lead to a D tente. Count von Radolin anticipated that the King would be given a courtly and brilliant reception, but it would not come up to the same inspired enthusiasm as the Tsar's visit called forth. And this view was no doubt shared by Lord Lansdowne as he sat in the Foreign Secretary's room overlooking St. James's Park on May Day, 1903, when his sovereign was breaking the ice with which colonial rivalries had thickly coated the relations between Great Britain and the French Republic.

Yet, although it seemed as if the German Ambassador's anticipations would be more than realized, King Edward at once showed that he understood his *m tier* far better than his nephew Nicholas II. Very different was his manner as he

greeted President Loubet on the platform of the Bois de Boulogne station to the frigid, imperial demeanor of the Tsar, which had so plainly displayed the autocrat's assumption of superiority over the chiefs of a mere republican state. True, King Edward did not embrace M. Loubet, but this — the cartoonist suggested — was ruled out, not by the protocol, but by his *embonpoint*. For the rest he shook him warmly by the hand, spoke in a tone that was almost, but not quite, "Hullo, old boy," and talked the most excellent French loudly enough for a good many bystanders to hear what he said.

These were impressed with the directness of the King's attack. He plunged at once into the all-absorbing question of the relations between the two countries. They were friendly. Might such friendship remain! "J'espère que celà durera," he declared, bringing out his *r*'s with a mastery which eluded his pronunciation of the same letter in his own language. And M. Loubet, beside whom the King looked quite tall, nodded his head decisively as he said: "Oui, oui, celà durera."

The drive through the Champs-Élysées to the British Embassy showed that this official friendliness did not go very deep. The Parisian onlookers stood silent and sullen, and M. Delcassé, who drove in the next carriage with Sir Charles Hardinge, sat on pins and needles as he heard cries of "Vivent les Boers!" "Vive Fashoda!" hurled at the procession. King Edward, refusing to be ruffled, carefully returned such salutes as he was offered. But his bows and smiles melted few hearts, and when they arrived at the Embassy one of his suite, underlining the obvious, remarked to the King: "The French don't love us." "Why should they?" was the reply which called in question the attitude of British statesmanship towards France during the previous twenty years.

The King's reply to a deputation of the British Chamber of Commerce later in the day marked the turn of the tide.



"When he makes a speech he does not try and pose as an orator, he simply says what he means" — so ran a comment apropos of this occasion. Yet, if oratory is to be judged by the effect it produces, King Edward's speech can rank amongst classics of its kind. It had a perfect introduction, recalling his very frequent visits to Paris in the past, his continually increasing affection for it, the old and happy associations that time could never efface — all this was flattering to the self-esteem of the world's politest city. The King spoke of the days of conflict being past, looked forward to only a friendly rivalry in peaceful progress and civilization, and then minted a phrase that rang with true eloquence: "A Divine Providence has designed that France should be our near neighbor, and, I hope, always our dear friend."

As the Parisians read reports of this speech they began to remember that *le roi Édouard* was one of themselves, a veteran *boulevardier* who without the slightest exaggeration could say that he always felt at home in their town of light and elegance. But this took some hours to percolate through the crust of suspicion which overlaid old memories. In the meantime the King, after a long and fatiguing day, had to suffer the glacial humor of the audience at the Théâtre-Français. All official Paris was there, but nothing in the frigid demeanor of the audience indicated the intrigues which the desire to receive an invitation had bred. An exception to the general dowdiness, La Belle Otéro sat in the front row of the stalls, from whence she regarded the house with languishing and disdainful eyes. Men and women wondered how she had received an invitation. When she boasted that the Prince of Wales had talked with her some years before, it was agreed that, if this were true, it only made her presence the more undesirable. Finally during the first *entr'acte* an official, bolder than the rest, accused her of being a gate-crasher, and the supercilious beauty, unable to deny the charge, had to leave the theatre.

It was the only incident of the evening. King Edward sat in his state box coughing rather wearily and sucking lozenges, which, it was noticed, did not appear to soothe the bronchitic affection already beginning to undermine his health. Both he and the President, still tired from his trip to Algeria, tried not to doze. They could not applaud, the President because the play contained anti-republican sentiments, the King because he had to follow the cue of his host. Altogether the evening went badly, and the story that the King emerged into the lobby at the *entr'acte* and won over the public by his tactful greeting of a famous actress, who had recently impersonated in London "all the grace, all the *esprit* of France," appears to be apocryphal. Sober history records that he never went into the foyer at all, receiving Madame Sorel and the other members of the cast in his box. Still the leaven began to work, and the truculence of the Nationalists to be drowned in the growing approval that greeted a carefully guarded King Edward wherever he went, whether at the Opéra, or Longchamp, or Vincennes, where he had to watch a review, a form of entertainment with which he had been surfeited ever since he was a baby. And when he drove to the Gare des Invalides after three and a half days of the most strenuous and exacting effort he had ever undergone, cries reached his ears of "Vive notre Roi!" The Boers and Fashoda had been forgotten.

So the Entente Cordiale, with which posterity must always associate King Edward's name, gradually crystallized, first into the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904, and then, under the pressure of war, into a formal alliance. The most important diplomatic instrument since the Treaty of Berlin, it assuredly ranks below that specimen of the collective wisdom of nineteenth-century Europe as a conscious effort in seeking and ensuring peace. Did King Edward, who in this very business of the Entente showed that he was not a man in a hurry, — had he not waited a quarter of a century



A CARTOON PUBLISHED IN "LE RIRE"  
MAY 16, 1903, UNDER THE CAPTION, "THE RETURN  
OF FRIEND EDWARD"

THE KING IS SAYING: "I THINK WE 'VE GOT 'EM."



to realize the ambitions he had once shared with Gambetta over many a repast at the Café des Anglais? — did the King realize the implications arising from the realignment into two groups which now became inevitable? The question can only fairly be answered by another. If the pacific intentions originally underlying the King's ideal of a *rap-prochement* between France and England took on another color, was not this due to the threat which Admiral von Tirpitz's already formidable and rapidly growing navy offered to the very existence of Great Britain and the British Empire? Undoubtedly during the increasing nervousness that in retrospect tinges the hectic brilliance of the Edwardian era, the King for the average Englishman stood as the guarantee of the peace which soon began to tremble in the international balance. One need not long have crossed the indefinite frontier of middle age to remember the song that Pelissier, the Edwardian interpreter of the cockney soul, used to sing: —

“ There 'll be no wa-wer  
So long as we 've a King like good King Edward.<sup>1</sup>  
There 'll be no wa-wer,  
For 'e 'ates that kind o' thing,  
Mothers won't worry as long as we 've a King  
Like good King Edward.  
Peace wiv' honour is 'is motter,  
So Gawd Save the King.”

The cockney was right; whilst good King Edward lived, no war cloud burst over Europe. Whether, had he reached his mother's span of years, the history of 1914-1918 would have been recorded in another key is one of those enigmas that have no answer. Assuredly the soothing psychological effect of so ripe a personality is not to be easily overrated; it even showed itself in Ireland, which he visited the same summer. King Edward, in his princely days, had

<sup>1</sup> *Accelerando* for the purposes of scansion.

believed that the establishment of a more personal tie between the Irish people and the Crown would go far to allay the bogey of Irish discontent which had baffled Victorian statesmanship and made of that British Poland the one demonstrable failure of the Anglo-Saxon in the endless adventure of government. A royal Viceroy, he had thought, holding his state in Dublin, a Prince of the Blood, taking the lead in the social life of the country — this would help to persuade the sympathetic, but temperamental, Celt that he was not the playboy of the Union. King Edward was no Home Ruler. The nationalism of Sinn Fein, which is trying to wipe out eight hundred years of history, would have been quite incomprehensible to him. But he knew that the Irish were desperately poor, and his own sympathy with poverty made him more tender than the normal Victorian gentleman to the troublesome people across Saint George's Channel, although the state visits he paid Ireland when Prince of Wales had not altogether borne out his belief in the sedative power of royalty over the impressionable Irish mind.

Now his opportunity had come. The idea of a royal Governor-General, which still attracted him, received no support from ministers and perforce had to be laid aside; so, too, on the score of expense, the project of an Irish residence where his son and heir could spend some weeks every year. A personal visit to Ireland stood out, therefore, as all the more pressing. His ambition to be the King-Peace-maker must be incomplete so long as the people across the Saint George's Channel grizzled and snarled and tried to bite the hands from over the sea that in turn patted and slapped them. So long as the Irish were guiltless of the one unpardonable sin in the royal eyes — so long as they were not disloyal, it was his duty to try to lift them out of the welter of politics and to set them upon their feet, even if it meant using English gold to do it.

He put the question to Sir Antony Macdonnell, the manner of whose appointment had made him grumble whilst he welcomed the spirit which prompted it: "Were the Irish disloyal?" "No, Sir," answered the Irish Catholic, who was a living example of the desire for conciliation now shown by the Conservatives towards Ireland. "What do they want?" the King asked. "Education and security in their land," came the answer. "I shall come to Ireland," said the King, and his words quickly flew from mouth to mouth, "with an Education Bill in one hand and a Land Bill in the other."

No King of England (except James II) had ever shown such tenderness towards the Irish Cinderella. Yet as the date finally fixed for the royal arrival in Dublin (July 20, 1903) came near, George Wyndham and the Cabinet hardly shared the King's confidence. The Irish people might not be disloyal, but the politicians who led them were, and when the Corporation of Dublin decided to abstain from taking any part in the official welcome it looked as if the visit might prove a fiasco. To George Wyndham on board the *Victoria and Albert*, as he went to breakfast on the morning of the royal yacht's arrival in Dublin Bay, the wet gray skies and the Pope's death together seemed poor auguries of success, and the members of the suite round the breakfast table struck him as being ill at ease, the ladies looking as if it were earlier than usual, none with much heart for the ample dishes spread before them or handed round by scarlet-liveried footmen — their pernickiness, we may think, a premonitory symptom of the decline of a once-glorious meal.

At the head of the table is an empty place, before it three substantial silver entrée dishes. "A hasty signal from Churchill" warns Wyndham off them as with some absence of mind he goes about the matter of eating. They are for the King. Then he enters, splendidly uniformed, fresh, the picture of health, the embodiment of kindness, a genial and

hungry man, taking things small and great in his stride. "The Pope's dead; of course we had expected it. . . . A boiled egg. . . . Did you sleep well? . . . Some more bacon. . . . You are my minister in attendance as well as Chief Secretary, you know." In the face of such calm, monumental confidence that everything would go right, adds Wyndham, the Pope's death and the weather did not matter so much; and that Edwardian Sir Philip Sidney, almost the last perfect specimen of an English gentleman, at once a man of letters and affairs, equally happy whether reading Ronsard, hunting the fox, or traveling third-class in French trains with Mr. Hilaire Belloc en route to walk over Burgundian hills, records how King Edward on this Irish visit won his love and respect and made him "feel it a high privilege to serve him" — a feeling that is the justification of kingship and the only prophylactic for the corroding egoism bred by democracy.

As the King approached the Irish problem with this assured technique, it promised, for the moment at least, to solve itself. He was all things to all men, or rather he was King Edward VII to all men. When those who came to present addresses — there were eighty-two, a total to remind him of his reception in Canada long ago — were overcome by shyness, he "coached them in a fat, cozy whisper." "Hand me the address," he would say, and then take it from their awkward hands with a graciousness that seemed to show his gratification at finding them "such adepts in court ceremonial." All classes reacted with a Celtic sensitiveness to these fine manners, not least the carmen, "who alone approached him in simplicity and charm." And to make this *genre* picture more complete, its lights were heightened by the Queen, "who was very naughty," trying her best to induce the Chief Secretary to "laugh at the funny people with their addresses," yet doing it in such a way "as to make everyone, including the culprit, feel comfortable and witty." They were a royal pair indeed.



Never for a moment did his touch fail him. A little girl at the Children's Feast summed him up in a sentence: "I am so glad we may love the King now because he has spoken so nicely of the Pope." But nice speaking only came from knowledge which he acquired by his favorite Socratic methods, keeping up his minister after a long day as he plied him with questions on every phase of Irish life. He was proof against fatigue, and proof too during these days against the irritation destined to come upon him more often as health began to fail. The review in Phoenix Park with which his stay in Dublin culminated must have rudely tried his meticulous taste for ordered pageantry. The enthusiasm of the crowd made the well-drilled chargers of the Blues so restive that they might have knocked the King down had they not been kept off by Lord Roberts and the Duke of Portland, that nobleman for once finding his Mastership of the Horse no sinecure. Both were relieved when they ran amuck amongst the Admirals from the fleet who were there as guests of the sister service. And as the King rode back to Dublin in a progress that was intended to be the climax of all this ceremonial, the popular frenzy proved too much for the cavalry lining the route. Loyal and agile Dubliners shouted their greetings from the tree-tops; women and children, trying to obtain a better view of the King of Ireland, darted under the hoofs of the horses. But as the frightened animals pirouetted and reared the King passed on, "lighting a cigarette to show his unconcern, bowing and smiling and waving his hand to the ragamuffins in the branches."

That "finished" George Wyndham and proved the psychological moment when he knew that he loved his sovereign.

The rest of Ireland followed Dublin and, apart from its self-constituted leaders, whose interests lay in fanning disaffection, capitulated to the King. He "put a whole population into hysteria," yet a hysteria based on pounds sterling as well as on the incalculable capital of loyalty upon which

King Edward was able to draw. He lay under no delusions and knew that the Irish were children, gifted children, to be helped as well as flattered, and to be given also the sober counsel that the old, since the world began, have offered to the young. So from Derry, "historic stronghold of Protestantism," he invited all his Irish subjects, whatever their religious allegiance, to treat one another with mutual toleration and respect — the Land Act, which was to pledge the British taxpayer in cash and credit to the tune of £112,000,000, setting his words in a solid gilt frame. And when finally he and his Queen stepped out of the train at Queens-town, after a fortnight's progress amidst a fortissimo of applause, "one old Irishwoman" (to quote George Wyndham once more) "on the platform just sobbed, saying: 'Come back, ah ye will come back!' That was the cry that pierced through the blaring of the bands and the blessings and cheers. 'Come back' they kept calling in every street."

Irish blarney, perhaps. King Edward, for all his mastery, could not smother the spirit of faction in so short a time, and he could not come back. Other things called him; he was too busy and too old ever really to follow up this *tour de force*, and when four years later he did revisit Dublin he was met with the imbroglio of the Crown Jewels, ugliest and most mysterious scandal of his reign. Now within a month this indefatigable man, pursuing duty no less indefatigably than his ungenial father had done half a century earlier, was visiting Vienna in state, doing the usual fatiguing rounds of banquets, reviews, gala performances, and no longer able as in other days to enjoy the unofficial gayeties of a city immortalized in the waltzes of Strauss. Still he appeared to enjoy himself, going everywhere freely and fearlessly, — as the Vienna paper remarked in comparing him with their other royal visitors, the Tsar and the Kaiser, — suiting his acts to his mood as if he were an ordinary mortal, or a straightforward Englishman. Not that everyone gave him or the

English character this credit, as it was whispered that the English King hoped to weaken the ties between the Austrian and the German Kaisers. Such surmises had little enough basis. But politics did enter into the visit, and King Edward had a conversation with the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister on the Balkans, another and large Ireland, where Serbia at the moment was the naughty child, having allowed its king and family to be murdered in their beds under circumstances of revolting barbarity. King Edward's respect for his royal craft, let alone his sentiments as a humane and kindly man, made him resolved to enter into no diplomatic relations with the new King Peter, who had profited by the crime. In dislike of Serbian ethics and in mistrust of Serbian ambitions, which were to precipitate the World War, King Edward and Kaiser Francis Joseph could find common ground. But five years later King Edward, who meanwhile had gone out of his way to pay attentions to Francis Joseph, changed his mind about that unlovable veteran of the royal caste. Till then he thought him friendly and frank — "a dear old man," as he called him. The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, however, carried through without warning and only a few weeks after he had visited the Austrian Emperor at Ischl and for the last time discussed Balkan affairs with what seemed complete intimacy and mutual confidence, moved King Edward as nothing else had done during his reign. But his visit to Vienna in 1903, that year of unremitting and apparently fruitful effort, bore no hint of the troubles ahead.

## XVIII

### “A KING THERE WAS IN BABYLON”

THE year 1903 was King Edward's *annus mirabilis*; the next year brought the Entente into the factors of diplomacy; it was followed by the international stress of 1905, when fears, rumors, predictions of war, formed a *basso ostinato* to the daily life of the European peoples as they found themselves halfway through the first decade of the new century. A few conservatives welcomed this harsh music as a sign that England had not lost its staunchness; it was attributed by everyone else to his own pet aversion. The Liberals blamed the Conservatives, the pacifists blamed armaments, the militarists blamed the want of them, the Socialists blamed the Capitalists, the Capitalists (if this species really exists outside the covers of books) blamed the Socialists. King Edward, habitually averse to generalization, more simply blamed the Kaiser.

Posterity will hardly do William II so great an honor. The fact was that the time, though it did not know it, thrilled to a magnificent pugnacity. Never had England, Europe, and America too, where President Roosevelt stood as the very embodiment of the fighter, busy, exceedingly determined, pouring out words from an enormous mouth, at every breath showing his teeth in a way which made him seem half a buffoon, half a savage — never had the world worshiped violence with such fervor. Mr. Lloyd George introduced it into party politics, Lord Fisher to the previously peaceful Admiralty, Lord Northcliffe to Fleet Street, Mr. Kensit into the services of the Church of England. The prophets of the new age

were not exempt. Mr. H. G. Wells, despising war between man and man, summoned the Martians across space to liven up a pacific world. Even the gospel of Mr. Bernard Shaw's Prefaces was expounded in sentences that rattled like machine guns.

That August, as King Edward surveyed Europe from Marienbad, he felt an anxiety he had not known before. His nephew William was behaving very badly. The trouble had started with his notorious visit to Tangier in the previous spring. When the Kaiser landed there in state, was received by the Sultan's uncle, and had the temerity to declare that his visit was a recognition of Moroccan independence, King Edward at once realized the implications in the Kaiser's gesture. Not love of liberty for the Moors, but the desire to read a lesson to France and France's friends — that was its motive. Here was the German answer to the Entente Cordiale, the material advantages of which had been based on the respectable principle of the *quid pro quo* in Egypt and Morocco, Egypt for England and Morocco for France. Now the Kaiser coolly said that the German Empire had great and growing interests in the western Arab country and that commerce could only progress if all the Powers had equal rights under the sovereignty of the Sultan. The King felt he had reason to be angry.

"The most mischievous and uncalled for event which the German Emperor has ever been engaged in since he came to the throne. . . . A political theatrical fiasco. . . . These annual cruises are deeply to be deplored and mischief is their only object. . . ." Thus the King wrote to Lord Lansdowne immediately after the event, when he was himself enjoying in the Mediterranean one of the annual cruises which made the Germans look upon him as the mischief-maker of Europe. Since then much had happened. King Edward, in answer to the Kaiser's diplomatic offensive, stopped in Paris on his way home, dined with President

Loubet, — "Pray, what relation is M. Loubet to your King that he sees him so often and never pays William a visit?" the Kaiserin asked of Lord Kintore, — and in a conversation with M. Delcassé reaffirmed his support of the French Foreign Minister's policy. He had done more, for he warned Prince Radolin how dangerous a situation the Kaiser was creating by his personal intervention in Moroccan affairs. "We put up with a lot from the old man," he said when Bismarck had retired many years before, "but we shall not put up with so much from his successor." And now William II and Von Bülow were challenging their neighbors' forbearance with more than Bismarckian effrontery.

At the time it looked as if the Kaiser would succeed in the policy which irritated the King by the crudeness of its methods as well as by the threats to France. For the King's efforts to stiffen French policy and to deter the Kaiser were followed in less than five weeks by a crisis, from which Germany emerged apparently triumphant and France once again humbled by her old enemy. On June 3, the Sultan of Morocco rejected the French scheme for the reform of his government and in his turn invited the Powers to a joint Conference to discuss the future of his country. Germany accepted with suspicious alacrity. Great Britain refused, but said that if France agreed to enter the Conference she would do likewise. Italy and Spain replied in similar terms; the United States agreed to act in the same sense as the British Government. In spite of the fact that Germany had no friends to rely upon except Austria and would probably fail to get her way at the Conference Table, Count von Bülow determined to carry things with a high hand and instructed Prince Radolin to inform the French Government that Germany would go to war if France persisted in opposing the Conference. Faced with what was an ultimatum in everything except the form, M. Rouvier, one of the many colorless personalities whose skill in the lobbies has made

them Prime Ministers of the Third Republic, hesitated, and although President Loubet and M. Delcassé were for seeing the thing through, M. Rouvier and the rest of the ministry decided to give way. On June 6, M. Delcassé resigned; in three days the German diplomatic offensive had to all appearances crumpled up the Entente, and the Kaiser's theatrical gesture had ended in a signal victory for Germany.

King Edward was both angry and anxious. The German hegemony of Europe, no longer a potential danger, stood out as a patent fact. France, Mr. Balfour wrote to the King on June 8 in his characteristically hypothetical vein, could not at present be counted on as an effective force in international politics. “If, therefore, Germany is really desirous of obtaining a port on the coasts of Morocco, and if such a proceeding be a menace to our interests, it must be to some other means than French assistance that we must look for our protection.” Such an insurance could be provided by diplomacy and by the armaments that were then, if they are not still, its most potent instrument. Armaments pointed to Sir John Fisher and Dreadnoughts; diplomacy to Russia.

King Edward and the Kaiser agreed in thinking that the key of the situation lay in Petersburg. The year before, in April 1904, following a tentative conversation with Lord Lansdowne and Count Benckendorff, Russian Ambassador in London, King Edward had broached the question of an Anglo-Russian *rapprochement* in a conversation at Copenhagen with M. Isvolsky, the future Russian Delcassé. The appointment of Sir Charles Hardinge, the British diplomatic ace, to the Petersburg Embassy had emphasized the importance which King Edward's government set upon the improving relations between the two countries. But the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the Russo-Japanese War, where British sympathies inclined to the Japanese, had prevented Hardinge from making much progress. Russia and Great Britain were still estranged, and whilst King Edward refused

to condemn "a brave and chivalrous people and distinguished from Europeans only by the color of their skins," the Kaiser's views on the Yellow Peril harmonized with the sentiments of the Russian Court. He told the Tsar that only through an understanding between Russia and Germany could British influence in Asia be counteracted.

But the Tsar's Ministers would not negotiate such a treaty with Germany, except in concert with France, and the Kaiser knew this would ruin his scheme. All through the autumn of 1904 he meditated by way of answer to the Entente the creation of a "Continental Combine flanked by America," which would "effectually block the way to the whole world becoming John Bull's private property, which he exploits to his heart's content, after having, by his intrigues without end, set the rest of the civilised nations by each other's ears for his own personal benefit." So wrote the Kaiser to Nicholas II, — they always corresponded in English — on July 27, 1905, five weeks after he had driven Delcassé from office and immediately following the signature of the secret Treaty of Björkö, by which the Kaiser thought he had isolated "the lazy bull-dog" once for all, and — still pleasanter to think upon — outwitted the old peacock, his uncle of England.

King Edward, as he drank the waters of Marienbad, did not know about this egregious and stillborn Treaty. He suspected the Kaiser had been up to no good colloquing with Nicholas II in the remote waters of the Gulf of Finland, and whilst at Cowes he had tried to find out what had occurred. But this time his sources of information failed: Count Benckendorff, "the Chamberlain of the King of England rather than the Ambassador of His Majesty the Tsar," as the Anglophobe Count Witte described him, knew nothing; the Tsar's mother, his own sister-in-law, who always told him everything, had not heard from her son; Lambsdorff, the Russian Foreign Minister, usually frank and communicative,



was silent — either could not or would not speak. It was — as the King is reported to have told one of the Kaiser's friends — very disagreeable. The result might be disastrous if Germany had squared the diplomatic circle and made an arrangement with Russia. France would become a second-rate Power. England's position would grow precarious everywhere in the world: in India; in the Straits Settlements, for the Kaiser nursed the idea of including Japan in his World Combine; even in Canada, so easily absorbed in the Republic over which the ambitious Roosevelt now presided — a man to be watched and if necessary flattered, in spite of the fact that he had successfully cast himself as mediator of Peace between Russia and Japan, the rôle which King Edward would have liked. . . .

*Omne ignotum pro magnifico* — if King Edward had known the true facts of the meeting at Björkö, he would have had still stronger reason for calling the forty-six-year-old Kaiser "the most brilliant failure in history." But of this he remained ignorant as he pursued his cure, the eyes of Europe upon him, its journalists finding good copy in his studied avoidance of his nephew, and even his ambassador in Berlin annoying him by pressing for a meeting — "a great piece of impertinence" was how he described an attempt on the part of Count von Seckendorff, one of the Kaiser's entourage who was probably prompted by Sir Frank Lascelles, to arrange for King Edward to see the Kaiser at Homburg on his way home. Nothing would induce him to do anything to make it appear he was "running after the Kaiser" — an undignified proceeding of which neither his ministers nor public opinion would approve. And apart from the difficulty of feeling well-disposed to the Kaiser after he had treated France so badly, remarks and jibes had come to his ears that were ungracious in a nephew. Lord Knollys ended his letter to the Count in a way to leave no doubt of his master's displeasure. "His Majesty in conclusion directs me to tell

you that he does not know whether the Emperor retains any affection for him, but from one or two things which he has recently heard, he should *say not*, so that it would do no good if he were to pay him a dozen visits in the year. . . ." This, following upon the statement that "the King, so far as he is concerned, has no quarrel whatever with the German Emperor of any sort," pointed to a complete break.

Nothing of the hate that is akin to love affected the King's feelings for the Kaiser. The nephew was jealous of his uncle; the uncle merely disliked his nephew as an *énergumène*, a chatterer, a busybody. Toleration was of the very stuff of King Edward's character, and the Kaiser did not know what the word meant. It was all very well for him to make offensive jests about his uncle's tastes, but he forgot the proverb cautioning those who live in glass houses. If a man is to be known by his friends, the very dubious morality of some of the Kaiser's intimates should have made him pause, and only a vulgarian King could have favored such an institution as the White Stag Club, at which the high-born German was initiated by telling a dirty story, kneeling over a chair and being smacked on the buttocks with the flat of the Kaiser's sword. . . .

So the King of England, "beset with a cloud of buzzing blue-bottles," — as Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman described "the great man," whom he nicknamed Jupiter in his family circle, — declared that for the moment the cure was his preoccupation, and *Lustige Blätter* of Berlin was able to publish the design for a medal bearing a marvelously shrunken kingly figure to commemorate its happy result. But King Edward, though he did not mean to interrupt or shorten his stay so that the world might see uncle and nephew once more together, found it not incompatible with the rigors of Marienbad to give some coaching to a politician who, at the beginning of his reign, had so roused his resentment that he had had difficulty in meeting him. "When



BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

In view of the numerous  
kinds of affairs which  
might arise were a conflict  
to take place between  
the House of Lords & the  
House of Commons on the  
amendments proposed  
by the former House  
on the Education Bill.

The King feels certain  
that Sir Henry Campbell-  
Bannerman <sup>Bannerman</sup>  
will agree with him  
in thinking it is  
most important that  
there should if possible  
be a compromise.

A LETTER FROM KING EDWARD TO SIR HENRY  
CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN

is a war not a war?" Campbell-Bannerman asked at a Liberal meeting in Edinburgh during the later stages of the campaign in South Africa, himself providing the answer: "When it is carried on by methods of barbarism." Such a monstrous allegation against the forces of the Crown Queen Victoria would never have forgotten or forgiven, and it had made King Edward at the time very angry. But the King was without rancor, and now as he foresaw the early collapse of the Balfour Ministry he realized that Campbell-Bannerman, a man without much experience of administration and looked upon by his principal lieutenants as a mediocrity, would soon be his Prime Minister.

No difficulties stood in King Edward's way, for Campbell-Bannerman was a habitu  of Marienbad and he drew the elderly and genial Scot, frightened as he was of the King's smart friends, into his circle. "C-B" sighed for his lost quiet, for the tranquillity he and his invalid wife had enjoyed in other years. But he could not be insensible to the charm and finesse of the King, who told him that he "must soon be in office, and very high office," and proceeded to discourse with great fullness on the state of Europe. He painted no rosy picture. On the relations between Germany, France, and Great Britain, the King was "very apprehensive, to put it mildly." Japan and Russia, the Indian Army, — the key question in that Empire of his, — Ireland, domestic problems, he reviewed all by turns, in everything appearing to be most reasonable; and whilst he "freely denounced" much that the Balfour Ministry had been doing, the Liberal statesman has recorded how he maintained the detachment expected from the Crown in party matters.

The King's flair had not been at fault. Within four months Campbell-Bannerman was at the head of a Ministry supported by an unprecedented and overwhelming majority in the House of Commons, and Sir Edward Grey, son of the former Equerry whose death at Sandringham had so upset

the Prince of Wales, was Foreign Minister. The social revolution was at hand, the attack on property about to begin. Statesmen faced the situation in their various ways. Lord Rosebery, the previous Liberal Premier, proudly aloof, refused to have anything to do with the Ministry. George Wyndham implored the gentry of England not to abdicate; Arthur Balfour, who had lost his seat in Manchester, wished to return to the House because he was "*now* so profoundly interested in what was going on." "The election of 1906," he wrote, "inaugurates a new era." Balfour was right: a new era had begun. But King Edward remained in office and it was certain therefore that one thing would continue unchanged. The King categorically affirmed it to M. Cambon, who voiced French apprehensions about the British attitude at the coming Conference at Algeiras. "Tell us what you want on each point," he said, "and we will support you without restriction or reserve."

The international atmosphere was undoubtedly explosive — on that there was fairly general agreement in the Chancelleries, although the Kaiser discounted the fears of the French Government. "The French were a bundle of nerves," he told Sir Frank Lascelles, "a female race, not a male like the German or the English" — one of those remarks that dismayed his friends and must have given a sardonic pleasure to King Edward when he read it in the Ambassador's dispatch. Certainly his imperial nerves were far from showing the equilibrium characteristic of the race he led, for at the New Year's Reception he lectured Lascelles on the Germanophobia of the English press, the result, he asserted, of money that had been freely spent to embitter the world against Germany — a statement King Edward very much regretted, as his marginal note records. Not that the King approved of the newspapers which reflected the pugnacity of the time. He agreed with his nephew on the harm done by the press in both countries, as he said in the birthday letter of January

1906, which this stickler for the family proprieties wrote to his dear William — a letter described by the Kaiser as breathing “such an atmosphere of kindness and warm sympathetic friendship, that it constituted the most cherished gift amongst all his presents.”

But whilst the German Government had ways and means of keeping its press in order, Fleet Street was a law unto itself. The King once tried to persuade the *Times* to cease its attacks on Germany and called in high finance to help him. But he and the capitalists had done no good. The *Times* was respectfully firm — it would have liked to accede to the royal wishes, but its attitude towards Germany was to be altered under no circumstances. And the King could only say that he was “very deeply disappointed and grieved” at the result of his failure to alter that paper’s policy.<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly the Kaiser’s nerves were on edge as the representatives of the Powers came together at Algeciras to discuss the future of the Caliph’s kingdom. The day after it met he declared to Alfred Beit, one of the many Jewish financiers who took a hand in trying to keep the Christian nations at peace, that King Edward had threatened to invade Schleswig-Holstein — the scheme was attributed to Fisher, whom the Germans rightly believed to be ceaselessly evolving war against them. Germany saw danger in the North, France saw it in the East, and the Conference had not been talking for a fortnight when the French Government, anticipating a deadlock with an explosion to follow, sent M. Cambon to ask Sir Edward Grey whether France could count on British assistance in case of war. To this plain question Sir Edward Grey was too honest to return a plain answer; British public opinion, he said, would not countenance war to put the French in Morocco, but it would be ready to fight if war was forced on France by Germany to break up the

<sup>1</sup> *Die Grosse Politik*, XVII, 309.

Entente, and the official Memorandum recording this conversation bears the comment "approved, E. R."

The King followed the proceedings of the Conference closely. The *Times* correspondent, Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace ("Very intelligent, a friend of King Edward's, a Jew naturally," was the Kaiser's description), kept Lord Knollys informed of its progress — or rather the lack of it, owing to German obstruction. "Germany," the King minuted on one of these letters, "forced the Conference on France and has never once attempted to conciliate or meet her. . . . Germany's interest [is] in France's humiliation and loss." Thanks to the diplomatic virtuosity of Sir Arthur Nicolson, France escaped both these eventualities. The Republic, and not Germany, emerged as the victor; or rather the victory went to Great Britain, as Mr. White, the American representative, said. Germany failed to secure the open door in Morocco, and she received no compensation elsewhere. Her position in Europe was shaken. Italy had proved unreliable. Russia had been drawn closer to England and France; the Entente itself, in M. Tardieu's words, had been transformed from a static to a dynamic condition. And in spite of the care with which the Kaiser cultivated the friendship of President Roosevelt in particular and of Americans generally, the United States had given no help. Instead of England it was Germany who found herself isolated, with Austria intending to ask a very high price for acting as second. Austria presented the bill two years later by annexing Bosnia-Herzegovina, the second signpost pointing the way to the war called Armageddon by Mr. Lloyd George, who knew his Revelations.

The first is said to have been Algeciras, if any metaphor of this kind can be usefully set down to indicate the chastening that in good time awaited the peoples and "kings of the earth and of the whole world." To King Edward, who, if he had ever thought about the matter at all, could hardly have

approved of the extreme violence of his Exemplar's policy towards Babylon the Great — to King Edward, Algeciras seemed rather to point the way towards peace. In his relief at the justification of the policy with which he was personally identified, he could once again consider the prospect of meeting his nephew. Everyone wanted it: Sir Edward Grey, the German Ambassador, not least the Kaiser, a snob at heart and lusting after an invitation to Windsor. So the King promised that he would see the Kaiser on his way to Marienbad the following summer. Windsor was another matter. The Emperor William would have to give an earnest of good behavior before he got that invitation, and King Edward put his nephew on a three months' probation until the Kaiser "shows he is springing no new surprises on us." And the petulant nephew wrote on a report from his Ambassador in London about the opportunity of establishing better relations: "Meetings with Edward have no lasting value because he is envious. *Propter invidiam.*" But he went to Windsor nevertheless.

As the sequel to Algeciras came the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907, negotiated between Nicolson, whose success at the Conference had given him the Embassy in Petersburg, and Isvolsky, now the Tsar's Foreign Minister, with whom King Edward had laid the foundation of a *rapprochement* in his conversation at Copenhagen in 1904. Like the Anglo-French Agreement, it attempted to settle all outstanding questions between the two countries, Persia, then apparently in the throes of dissolution, making the burial ground for the animosities which Russia and Great Britain had cherished for nearly a century. So great a change in British policy caused misgivings throughout Asia. It excited the apprehensions of the Indian Government, which Lord Minto communicated direct to the King, who appreciated his point of view, but pointed out that it was a question of high policy to be decided by the home government. Lord



Curzon, knowing more about Persia and India than any other living statesman, declared in the House of Lords that Russia was not to be trusted — just as the Empress Frederick had written in the eighties. And whilst the Imperialists muttered, the left wing of the Liberal Party and young Labor cried anathema on the unholy alliance with Tsardom.

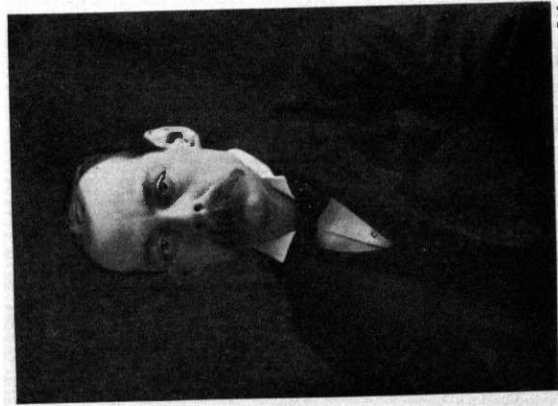
King Edward hitherto had overtly had little to do with the Agreement, which, for that reason, had made less stir in Europe than might have been expected. When, to strengthen the friendlier relations established between the two countries, he arranged to meet the Tsar in the Baltic during June 1908, public opinion again bestirred itself. This, the last diplomatic visit of his to which Europe attributed high political significance, everywhere excited hopes or fears. The three Rothschild brothers begged the King to intervene with the Tsar on behalf of their oppressed fellow countrymen. Sir Ernest Cassel, a convert to Catholicism, and therefore less concerned with his former coreligionists, provided the King with a Memorandum about the loan he was hoping to float in Russia — a private deal of which the Government knew nothing. Anglo-Catholics saw in it a portent of reunion between Anglican and Greek Christendom. No one welcomed the *rapprochement* as being likely to bring the Imperial Russian Ballet to London. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald protested that the King should visit “a common murderer,” and Keir Hardie, during the debate about the matter in the House of Commons, said that it amounted to the King “condoning atrocities” — a remark that excited the just wrath of the Sovereign. The Paris press hopefully looked forward to the Triple Entente becoming a Triple Alliance — and in Germany there were corresponding fears that the encirclement of the Fatherland would soon be an accomplished fact.

Those accompanying the Sovereign and his consort on the *Victoria and Albert*, as the royal yacht ploughed its way

across a tumultuous North Sea, were too sick to weave any encircling webs. With the King on this family visit were formidable representatives of diplomacy and war, Hardinge and Nicolson, French and Fisher — Fisher, so it is said, the greatest sufferer of all, the King one of the few to retain his appetite. Not till they reached the shelter of the Heligoland Bight did spirits revive; not till the arrival of the *Victoria and Albert* at Reval did the King turn his attention to the matter in hand. Then he summoned to his cabin Sir Arthur Nicolson, who found his sovereign, transformed into a stout Russian cavalryman, sitting, tightly uniformed, in a chintz armchair. Nicolson remarked the photographs in silver frames, the pot of *lilium speciosum*, the strong smell of expensive cigars. The King proceeded to fire every sort of question at his Ambassador, from the exact scope and provisions of the Anglo-Russian Convention to the uniform and decorations that the Emperor would wear. He asked him about the personal relations between Stolypin and Isvolsky, how they stood *vis-à-vis* the Empress, whether M. Stolypin spoke French, or German, or even English; he questioned him about Russian railways, finances, the army and navy, education, asked the names of some of the leading writers, musicians, and scientists. "Would the Emperor talk about the Japanese Alliance? If so, what was the best thing to say? Was it a thing to mention? Or not? Would the speeches be at luncheon or at dinner? Would Baron Frederickz be content with a K. C. V. O.?"

Mr. Harold Nicolson's lively sketch<sup>1</sup> of that scene shows the King employing the method of knowledge which he had followed throughout his life. The manner in which he used the knowledge thus expeditiously gathered whilst waiting for the Tsar, his family and ministers, to come aboard the *Victoria and Albert* amazed and fascinated Stolypin. This King of England knew everything about Russia, understood

<sup>1</sup> In his *Lord Carnock*.



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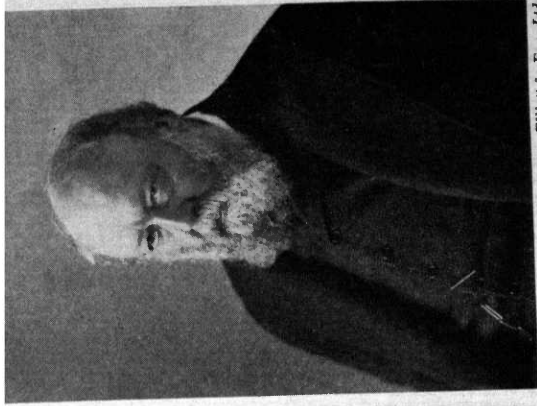
LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL



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W. E. GLADSTONE

THE KING'S HENCHMEN



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LORD SALISBURY



his difficulties, even those he encountered on the back stairs at Tsarskoe Selo. Stolypin, the one master statesman to serve Nicholas II, recognized in the British Sovereign a kindred spirit, who for his part was able to do the little commissions for his friends. He mentioned the plight of the Jews, and the Russian Premier assured him that legislation was projected for the improvement of their lot. He asked the Tsar to receive Cassel if he went to Russia. How easy and pleasant politics became when handled in this Mozartian fashion! Amidst all the informal talk the Englishmen did not seem to have a doubt, a care in the world, and their King appeared the most carefree of all.

Nicholas, no less than Stolypin, yielded to the charm of the King's personality. His uncle had a soothing influence, inspired him with some of his own self-confidence — so different from his cousin William, who was apt to patronize him, to make him “feel anxiety all the time as to what might unexpectedly be sprung upon him.” Here was a kingliness which the unhappy, weak little autocrat could at least dimly recognize as something to admire if he could never achieve it.

So everything went off happily. The King became a Russian, the Tsar an English admiral. The Tsar ate good food on the *Victoria and Albert*, the King ate bad food on the imperial yacht *Standardt*. The Tsaritsa was amiable, the Grand Duchesses simpering, the little Tsarevitch chiefly interested in his sailor nurse. And the picture was telegraphed round Europe of the two sovereigns in this family gathering sitting together on deck in the long twilight of those northern latitudes, listening to the melancholy voices of a Russian choir singing on another craft moored near by. So close was this ship that some of the King's entourage, always remembering, like good courtiers, the possibility of things going wrong, grew nervous at its propinquity. Surely an anarchist might commit some outrage at such close quarters. But the Chief of the Russian Police assured them

there was no danger. All the singers, male and female, had been stripped and searched before they were allowed to embark — another bull point for the Socialists if the thing became known. . . .

A little more than a week after he had left England the King was back again, ready to resume the activities of the London season which Whitsuntide had interrupted. It was in connection with one of these, and not with the precautions of the Russian police at Reval that a storm raged in the cocoa cups of Westminster and Fleet Street. The King did not see why he should be the only man in England to have to invite to his house those who had insulted him, and so Keir Hardie, Victor Grayson, the Labor Party's baby, and Mr. Arthur (now Lord) Ponsonby, who had spoken against his visit to the Tsar, received no invitations to the royal Garden Party. The Socialists put down the omission to inadvertence, but Mr. Ponsonby, who had been brought up at the Court, knew that such mistakes did not occur, and when he found out that the thing had been done at the King's orders he got on to his highest Liberal horse — he declared it an insult to his constituents and an attempt by the Sovereign to influence members by social pressure.

When Mr. Ponsonby put the matter in this light, Mr. Keir Hardie, a good Trade-Unionist and ready to feel intense indignation as soon as a grievance was pointed out to him, thumped heavily upon his drum. Now it was no question of being unsmirched by the flunkeyism of the Court. On the contrary, this mild banishment from royal favor, from walking on the lawns of Windsor and eating ices in the royal marquees, adumbrated the revival of Stewart tyranny. He told his Welsh constituents that the King had been outside politics since the days of Charles I — a picturesque rather than a true statement — and had better remain outside, and the Labor Party, going at full steam on the lines which Mr. Ponsonby had set them, passed a resolution calling on the

Lord Chamberlain to remove all the other Labor M. P.'s from the official list of royal guests whilst their leader's name was not included. The Radicals were also pained and anxious. It was monstrous that the Sovereign should show the slightest will of his own. They had thought the monarchy decently fossilized, they had looked upon it as an extinct volcano, and now came this incident, distracting, disgusting, "unexpected as a volcanic eruption from Primrose Hill."

To the offending Labor members the King was placable, but he could not so easily forgive Mr. Ponsonby, who should have known better. Not until the Chief Government Whip had intervened with Lord Knollys, and pointed out that there were circumstances to mitigate the King's "very just resentment," and not until Mr. Ponsonby had assured Lord Knollys that he had no intention of making a personal attack on the King, "for he appreciated very highly the exceptional position the King had made for himself as a strong influence for international peace," did King Edward consent to regard the affair as closed.

This was the second domestic incident of 1908, a year when the King was absent from England for three months altogether, visiting, apart from his trip to Reval, France, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Norway (where his son-in-law had won a crown), Spain, and Malta. His frequent and prolonged absences, said H. W. Massingham, a Liberal who feared the growing influence of the Crown, recalled the days of the early Georges.

The first *contretemps* arose in the spring, when Campbell-Bannerman, after a month's illness, was forced to resign. At the time, King Edward, whose bronchitis had now gravely affected his general health, was at Biarritz. There in the sunshine, the mild Atlantic breezes, the congenial society of Sir Ernest Cassel, Lady Troubridge, Mrs. Keppel, and "a great many pleasant people," he enjoyed the diversions of

movement and conversation. Quiet motor trips, with somewhere under the pines an alfresco tea which he would himself help to pack up afterwards, small dinner parties, the rubbers of bridge — all these helped to distract his mind from the state of his own health and of that of Europe. To return to the east winds of England in April would have been both dangerous and disagreeable. Asquith, therefore, went to Biarritz, and in the King's suite on the ground floor of the Hôtel du Palais resigned his office of Chancellor and kissed hands on his appointment as Prime Minister — an extraordinary thing to happen in a hotel on foreign soil.

In the past the King had criticized his mother for not coming up to London from Osborne when a cabinet crisis made her absence inconvenient. Now he was blamed for a more serious dereliction of the same duty — such an incident had more in common with the customs of the Angevins than of the throne of Hanover, said the chief Liberal paper, cut to the heart because Mr. Asquith's journey to Biarritz made it necessary to postpone the debate on the Licensing Bill, the peristyle of every Liberal Temple. The constitutionalists, — whoever these might be — fearful of the rising democratic tide, were critical because they could not exaggerate the importance of "keeping the constitutional functions of the Crown fully in evidence." So wrote the *Times* in the last of the many leading articles in which it attacked Queen Victoria's eldest son for his sins of commission and omission. "That this high constitutional function . . . has taken place at Biarritz is a very wide departure from hitherto unbroken precedent," and it hoped — the *Times* had hoped for him as Prince and King some fifty years — it hoped that nothing of the kind would happen again. It was the only occasion when King Edward had a bad press, for the incident of the Garden Party met with approval from the great majority of his subjects. And he was prevented, by the convention that Kings are never seriously ill until they



die, from alleging the excuse of necessity, the only plea, as the *Times* admitted, which could be regarded as adequate.

The King let this mild gale of disapproval blow itself out. As he struggled with his bronchitis, which drained his strength and threatened in its spasms to choke him, there were more serious things to worry over than newspaper criticism or Radical outcries at misuse of his social power. Only a few weeks had passed since the perpetration of a crime which outraged him as a man and a king. On February 1, 1908, King Carlos and his eldest son, the Crown Prince, were killed by republican desperadoes whilst driving through the streets of Lisbon. Carlos was his friend of years, the King of the country which was England's traditional ally, the sovereign represented at the Court of St. James's by his beloved De Soveral. And now Carlos and his eldest son had been foully murdered, his younger son wounded, all before the eyes of the Queen, recently a guest at Windsor, who had narrowly escaped with her life. It was an ugly portent when the political underworld, which ever since 1848 had always been on the fringe of King Edward's consciousness, was thus able to shed royal blood in a European country with an old and splendid culture.

Earlier in his reign the King showed his detestation of political assassination and his innate respect for the kingly vocation when officers of the Servian Army murdered King Alexander and Queen Draga under circumstances of revolting barbarity. Diplomatic relations had been broken off, and on the Foreign Office urging some months afterwards the inconvenience of having no minister at Belgrade, King Edward, in this a better patriot and moralist than the professional diplomats of Downing Street, answered "there was no need for England to recognize a Government consisting of assassins." The new King Peter, whose son now reigns over the uneasy Kingdom of the Slavs, Croats, and Slovenes, pulled every possible string to obtain King Edward's

recognition, and when his agents told him that not Whitehall but Buckingham Palace stood in the way, he used his friendship with Nicholas II and his relationship with the Queen of Italy to obtain the personal intervention, on his behalf, of the Russian and Italian Ambassadors. They saw King Edward at Windsor and begged him to hold out his royal hand to a King whose cause was dear to the sovereigns they represented. But King Edward, though two years had elapsed since the bodies of the former King and Queen of Servia had been thrown from the bedroom window of their Belgrade Palace into the courtyard below, had a longer memory and a higher reverence for kingship than his brothers in the craft. He would have nothing to do with King Peter. For one thing, he said, public opinion would not approve of his complying with the Ambassadors' request. "Besides," he went on, "I have another, and so to say, a personal reason. *Mon métier à moi est d'être Roi.* King Alexander was also by his *métier* 'un Roi.' You see we belonged to the same guild, as labourers or professional men may be said to do. And I cannot be indifferent to the assassination of a member of my profession, or, if you like, a member of my guild. We should be obliged to shut up our business if we, the kings, were to consider the assassinations of kings as of no consequence at all. I regret, but you see that I cannot do what you wish me to do."

It had been a shocking business, but Eastern nations, like Russia and the Balkan States, had a morality which did not belong to Europe. When ugly fissures appeared in the crust of a country like Portugal, it became really alarming. Admittedly King Carlos had been unwise in supporting the dictatorship of Senhor Franco. "A constitutional king does not do such things," King Edward said to his throat specialist, Sir Felix Semon, soon after the news of the tragedy had reached England. Yet what was a constitutional monarch to do when faced with a discredited parliamentary system

which was dragging his country to ruin? Whether King Edward asked himself the question we do not know; much less whether he considered it in relation to his own position, or to that of his successor. In any case, his distress was profound. After the memorial service in St. Paul's Cathedral he went to Brighton for a week, where he stayed in the strictest incognito at his son-in-law's house. Never had his entourage seen him so utterly spiritless, never perhaps had the delightful profession appeared to him so emptied of delight, or the flower of life so palpably to be ashes in its fruit, as he watched the livid waters of the Channel during that week of February. He wished to be unobserved and to be let alone — most sinister sign of all. The good people of Brighton were told that if they showed the slightest curiosity His Majesty would be driven away. And daily throughout that week the benches on the sea front at Rottingdean were repainted to prevent any curious subjects from peeping at their sovereign whilst slyly pretending to rest their limbs as they smelled the sea breezes.

Brighton did his bronchitis good and repaired the self-confidence which he never needed more than in that last year or two of his life. Trouble threatened everywhere, and as the clouds covered the sky of England, the Empire, Europe, he saw little cheerful in any prospect. He deplored that at home “the spirit of party came before that of country” — to reach its crest in Mr. Lloyd George's People's Budget of 1909, which he thought disgraceful, bringing in its train the battle between the two Houses of Parliament, threatening to involve the prerogatives of the Crown. The old, staid England was vanishing before his eyes, and it made the vision of the crude youngster which was replacing it no pleasanter because he had helped to bring it to birth. The old decorum had gone, the new was vanishing amidst a welter of pugnacity and ill manners. Liberal politicians called the Peers “assassins,” Conservatives refused to give

Mr. Lloyd George the credit either of honesty or of his first name — to them he was Mr. George, a little Welsh attorney. Lord Fisher wished to “Copenhagen” the German fleet, a monstrous piece of presumption, Lord Roberts to introduce compulsory military service; Clemenceau, now the French Premier, had the temerity to offer advice on English politics and told the King that England had overthrown Napoleon not at Trafalgar but at Waterloo. In a topsy-turvy world the King might really wonder whether he was not standing on his head when his Prime Minister failed to obey his command to stay at Windsor and the Sovereign had to learn from Mrs. Asquith that her husband had gone to the Riviera without even having the courtesy to take his leave in person — a startling derogation this from the awe that should surround majesty.

He kept his good temper as without much success he tried to apply the brake whilst the Party of Progress — for so it called itself — drove the machine, which it now controlled, with all the rashness of inexperience. The caution that is the essence of statesmanship no longer counted, and as his ministers tore along the road of domestic and imperial politics they kept him in a perpetual fever of apprehension. He deprecated any hasty federation of South Africa — and South Africa followed the example of Australia, which he was sure had been premature in this matter, a shrewd judgment shared by few at the time. “Though he had no extraordinary disposition to be fidgety about India,” as Lord Morley, the originator of the troubles which now plague that semi-continent, complacently wrote, yet he felt grave alarm at the latter’s policy of Indianization, and when the Secretary for India proposed to admit Mr. (afterwards Lord) Sinha to the Viceroy’s Council, the King-Emperor vehemently opposed the idea. He had to yield to a unanimous Cabinet. But his protest from Biarritz to Lord Morley stands on record: “The King has no alternative but to give way much

against his will. He however wishes it to be clearly understood that he protests most strongly at this new departure. God grant that the Government in India may not suffer from it. Beyond that the King can say no more.”

He felt happier about the future of Canada now that he no longer regarded the pugnacious President Roosevelt as a dangerous Anglophobe. At one time he had been afraid what this American counterpart of the Jingo might do in the world. But after King Edward had established personal ascendancy in Europe, he had wondered whether he might not extend his conquest to the other side of the Atlantic. True, he could not meet President Roosevelt face to face and exert on him the personal fascination to which so many had succumbed; but he could congratulate him on his inauguration for a second term and accompany the letter with some present to show its personal nature. What should it be? A copy of the Queen's Journal of her Life in the Highlands, with a request that in return the President might send one of his own books for the King to add to his library at Windsor? This would surely flatter his author's pride, whilst the King made no promise to read it. Cecil Spring-Rice, his Ambassador in Washington, with whom he talked the matter over, had a brilliant idea. There was a miniature of John Hampden in a case in the Windsor galleries. Let him send that. What could better stand as a symbol of the ties uniting the two peoples, be a more democratic gesture, than the picture of this worthy who led a rebellion against one of the King's ancestors and also owned land in the American colonies?

King Edward was delighted. He drafted “a personal Godspeed to the elected chief of the republican branch of the English-speaking people.” He recalled what his parents had personally done to “prevent the horrible calamity of war” between the two countries. Were it only possible for him to welcome President Roosevelt in England during

his term of office, he "should see what a reception would be given to the President of the United States by the King of Great Britain and Ireland and by his people." And he ended a charmingly personal letter by mentioning the two gifts he was sending and asking for a book of Mr. Roosevelt's in return. Then he sent it to Lord Lansdowne.

The Foreign Office replaced the King's phrases by the impersonal style of officialdom, deleted the Godspeed, the republican branch, his parents, the welcome he would like to show the other head of the race that speaks English, and the Queen's book and his desire to possess an author's copy of *The Winning of the West*. All these went. On the other hand, every paragraph now began with a different word, — the King naturally inclined to begin his sentences with an "I," — and the King was made to hope (what he had not hoped before) that Mrs. Roosevelt was in the best of health. Whether King Edward grieved for this subediting we do not know. Anyhow he signed the letter, and thenceforth King and President grew to be cordial correspondents. President Roosevelt in a few months sent the King another of his books; the King replied with a wedding present for the President's daughter, "The Princess Alice of the United States," as those of her compatriots called her who were jealous of the attentions she received from King Edward and the Kaiser. "Dear Mr. President" became "My dear Mr. President," a possessive mark of cordiality, if not of affection, which the great business heart of America has taken unto itself. Thus, although these two master spirits never met, the reign of King Edward marks the epoch when the people of England and America began to hold each other's hands. Recriminations only started later, when they put their hands in each other's pockets.

• "The terrible calamity of war," in King Edward's words, with America had been exorcised, perhaps forever. But King Edward, who in his prime had grieved over one great European war, now in his old age saw another and a greater

approaching. Since Algeciras, the Kaiser had been chastened, and relations between uncle and nephew in the last years of the King's life ran a fairly placid course. William's oddities, his exuberant instability, his folly of grandeur, his "God-complex," his terrible friends, these things still weighed in the scale against him. But he had made no theatrical coup, had let Reval pass without any great sabrerattling, and when he visited Windsor had been pleasantly flattering to his uncle's great position and his magnificent castle. It was the other Kaiser, patriarchal Francis Joseph, who now set Europe by the ears. When King Edward met him at Ischl in August 1908, he was still the "dear, old man," grown older and perhaps dearer than when the King first so described him six years before. They had discussed the Balkans, their statesmen had discussed the Balkans — all had agreed that the sky of that impossible region was serene.

Two months later it suddenly became so black that it looked like bursting over Russians and Austrians, Frenchmen and Germans. Austria, by the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, challenged the aspirations of Slav domination in the Balkans, tore up the Treaty of Berlin, set Europe into two camps, with Italy this time on the side of its allies, banished the peace that Disraeli and Bismarck had secured in 1878. At Tangier, William II lit his German pipe in a powder magazine; now Francis Joseph and Aehrenthal, his Foreign Minister, began to dance a Viennese waltz in a dynamite factory.

The Austrian Kaiser sent a letter in the second person singular to his brother king, which Count Mensdorff, his Ambassador in London, had to deliver in person. Mensdorff, as he traveled to Balmoral with his sovereign's missive in his dispatch case, prepared for a bad quarter of an hour. His anticipations proved correct, for King Edward read the letter with a frozen fury. It was a gross communication, monstrous in every particular: the Emperor's previous silence, which was tantamount to treachery; Aehrenthal's duplicity; the breach of etiquette in sending a personal letter

through the official channels of an Embassy. Mensdorff, who prided himself on his relationship to the royal family of England and on his popularity at Court, received a glacial dismissal. King Edward was furious. The murder of King Carlos had shocked him as a King; this upset him as a statesman. "No one who was there," says Lord Redesdale, then staying at Balmoral, "can forget how terribly upset he was." But he soon recovered his self-control, and Lord Morley, another eyewitness of the King's reactions to the Austrian coup, admired the "diligence, attention and shrewd sense with which he tackled the cunning tangle."

Neither the King nor the Kaiser, on both of whom the storm came unawares and who both felt the same righteous anger, were able to do very much. The Kaiser's first impulse was to disown his brother Kaiser. Bülow prevented it, and by his subservience towards Germany's Austrian ally on this occasion emboldened it to present another cheque in July 1914. The British Government equally supported Isvolsky, whom it now knew to be weak and suspected of being crooked. And King Edward, smarting under the attacks of the Vienna press, grew to regard Serbia with something like favor, actually approving — such is the whirligig of high politics — the suggestion that King Peter's son should visit London. If the Powers were going to look for trouble in the stormy Balkans, a European war was bound to come. And in such a case Serbia and England would be fighting on the same side. It might be a second-best choice, but in statecraft the second-best often had it.

The coup ended in a victory for Austria, a defeat for Russia. But Francis Joseph and Aerenthal paid dearly for their success by forfeiting the goodwill of France and Great Britain. Ten years later, when both King Edward and the Emperor Francis Joseph were in their royal tombs, the Empire which the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was intended to consolidate fell to pieces.



## XIX

### THE GATHERING STORM

As King Edward's subjects watched him traveling indefatigably round the Europe he knew so well, from the Babylon of Rome to that of Paris or Berlin or Vienna, they were only too pleased to think that he held in his hands all the strings of foreign policy. It was a new thing, and striking to the imagination, this peripatetic diplomacy, which now indeed has been carried to the other extreme as in a republican age ministers with a precarious hold upon office dash from capital to capital in feverish attempts to apply their own remedies to deep-seated ills. But a man like King Edward, with no party axe to keep sharp, did not inspire misgivings except amongst his country's enemies. He was so obviously master of his craft, and the very fact that the Liberal Government of 1906 followed the lines laid down by its despised Tory predecessor indicated that the King was the real author of the country's foreign policy. How could a Foreign Secretary like Sir Edward Grey, who never crossed the Channel and hardly spoke a word of any other language but his own, compare with a King who knew French and German perfectly and made a point of being acquainted with every important figure in European politics? The King's command of his *métier* was plain to all, though only the initiated could realize, as Stolypin had realized at Reval, that not only in what he said, but in the way he said it, King Edward left upon foreigners the impression of an artist in international politics whom Europe regarded as its first statesman.

The artist in him was to be seen by the Englishman — never bothering his head about the state of Europe — more plainly in the Babylon at home. Or, if “artist” is a suspect word, he made the ideal king, “the King of England best known and best trusted by his people — the personal friend of the Man in the Street.” So said Father Bernard Vaughan — and *he knew*, for none wrestled more energetically than he with the universal Babylon. King Edward corresponded exactly to the Englishman’s idea of the happy man, enjoying what stands for him as the perfect life, where the pulse of affairs does not beat too strongly to make a man irresponsive to the rhythm of galloping thoroughbreds, or to the sweep of high-flying pheasants — a life setting up no Puritanical standards, following the gleam, the arc light of pleasure, but yet paying homage to discretion and common sense. The secret was that he remained young and kept his insatiable curiosity for the world about him. His enthusiasm for the motor car was of a piece with a character modern even in the detail that he brought back a mechanical lighter with him from Paris, the first of its kind to be seen in London, whilst his explosions tallied with the traditional type of the bluff Englishman, suggesting a comparison with Henry VIII, in whom Englishmen have always loved to see themselves. Many were the myths that grew round this king in a democracy: how he still remembered his lifelong friends, the London cabbies, when on early summer mornings sleeplessness drove him to make the round of St. James’s on his tricycle; how he still had a word for the ancients of the Turf who had hawked their wares when he was a Prince; how he remembered the faces of the domestics in great houses. Sometimes a subject would have unexpected proof of his sovereign’s insatiable appetite for the *commerce des hommes*, as happened to the benighted wayfarer groping his way through St. James’s on an evening of such thick fog that all carriage traffic had ceased. Suddenly the blackness

lightened and policemen appeared out of the murky proximity carrying torches. As they progressed with stately deliberation, eight of them in a hollow square, the figure of an elderly gentleman with a top hat pushed well over his eyes showed in their midst. It was King Edward going out to dine.

On the one hand was this informality; on the other an opulent magnificence, a delight in dignified pomp, even in the paraphernalia of wealth, that specially gratified the taste of the time. King Edward was no connoisseur like George IV. Yet if the surface of Edwardian society seems coarse by comparison with that of the Regency, its *décor* is to our own time as a Tree production at His Majesty's to a Metro-Goldwyn picture; or, if we look to the common denominator of art, we find the spiritual qualities of the nineteen-hundreds are better expressed, not in Sargent's flashy portraits, but in Elgar's symphonies, which for all their over-decoration and too rich coloring have yet an underlying seriousness and are perfectly sure that they stand as the well-bred heirs of a great tradition.

Into the centre of this glittering picture King Edward fitted the better for being a great spender. He had not changed his ideas about money and still regarded it as his servant — a view which, to do lucre justice, it dutifully accepted. "Gentlemen," said Lord Knollys to the members of the committee appointed after the King's accession to study the financial needs of the Crown, "it is my happy duty to inform you that for the first time in English history the heir-apparent comes forward to claim his right to the throne unencumbered by a single penny of debt." The miracle had been worked, a gossiping diarist records, by the King's friends, one of whom advanced £100,000 against an eventual repayment of £25,000 plus a knighthood. If such rumors filtered through to the Man in the Street, they made him think little the worse of his King, indeed rather

increased his admiration that he should use the brains — and the pockets — of City millionaires to provide him with the resources necessary for the playing of his part.

As one of his entourage pointed out, the King was no capitalist, he had nothing beyond his salary. But he would not for this reason try to save money like his mother, or adopt the bourgeois expedient of living within the income of £500,000 given him by Parliament. He could be careful in small things and say to the distinguished vet, wishing to sell him a dog: "Man, do you think I am made of money?" But after all, that was being penny-wise — going to bed early in order to save candles and then getting twins, as the Japanese proverb says. True, in this case he got "Cæsar," who had precedence of the Kaiser at his master's funeral — he had been required, said the Kaiser, to do many odd things when he was in England, but never before had he been asked to walk behind a dog. The King got Cæsar for nothing. But what counted the economy against the expenses of keeping his Court at Windsor?

Never before had the Castle seen such pageantry. It became an English Versailles, to dazzle visiting emperors, kings, presidents, to turn the Kaiser into a rhapsodist, tiring out President Loubet as he was shown its galleries and halls, and making King Alfonso hold his stomach with hunger as, inspecting the treasures under King Edward's eager guidance, he waited for luncheon at the awful hour of half-past two. Hospitality at the Castle was unbounded and magnificent. There the normal life of the Court was governed by a stricter etiquette than at Sandringham, and "perpendicular evenings" were apt to follow dinner, until courtiers — for the Queen loved standing and the King liked a parade through the state rooms — rejoiced when that privileged personage, the old Duchess of Devonshire, who hated the pictures, could lead the King to the bridge table and so relieve the strain for everyone except the players. A seat

at the King's bridge table was an honor not to be lightly coveted, for it meant running the gauntlet of the King's chaff, which might be trying, or, what was worse, of being exposed to his card-player's melancholy. And courtiers bidden to take a hand could not excuse themselves, as did the young lady at Marienbad who wittily explained that she did not know a King from a knave.

Great house parties, — once when the Kaiser was the principal guest twenty-three other royalties, kings and queens and princes, sat with him round the King's luncheon table, — with much slaughter of pheasants in the Park and often theatricals at night with supper to follow, were a drain on the Privy Purse, as were the banquets in the St. George's Hall, when the King and Queen might entertain a hundred and fifty guests who, if disappointed as *gourmets*, could not help reacting to the gold plate, the Sèvres china, the beef eaters lining the walls, the scarlet footmen, the Scotch pipers, and the whole ensemble of a function presided over by a host the most distinguished and most interested person present.

The King reveled in his own hospitality. When delegations came from foreign countries he liked them to see the Castle and then be given a collation in the Waterloo Chamber — the name tactfully veiled when the guests were French. And, apart from the garden parties, there were the groups of visitors from overseas, sometimes numbering several hundreds, who had to be entertained to a more humble tea. These might come when the Court was absent, and they would then be shown the Private Apartments and, if they were Australians, the water colors of Sidney Harbor specially hung for the occasion outside the King's study — a trick of the trade which never failed to impress. And if the levees at St. James's Palace cost nothing, this could not be said of the Courts at Buckingham Palace, where women of fashion behaved like a flock of sheep in the state rooms but suggested the comparison of wolves when supper time came.

Economy was impossible. So long as King Edward was master of Windsor Castle and Buckingham Palace, so long as he had Balmoral and Sandringham and the *Victoria and Albert* and royal suites at Biarritz and Marienbad and the Hotel Bristol, — so long, in fact, as he was King of England and Uncle of Europe, — he had to spend and spend. Debts began to accumulate, until Lord Fisher, Lord Farquhar, and Sir Ernest Cassel took over the administration of the royal household “and in 1907 were able to tell the King that everyone had been paid.”<sup>1</sup> Yet the scoffing Kaiser still laughed at his uncle’s Jews, as he learned from his friend and their brother in race, Ballin, how Alfred Beit provided him with “the heaps of gold” he needed, the share in Beit’s profitable Stock Exchange transactions.

Incessant traveling, the frequent migration which the Roman poet attributed to instability of mind, proved another tax on the royal resources, though well worth the expense of spirit, let alone that of the purse, it entailed. After all, he was King and had to show himself constantly to his subjects, even to the extent of slowing down the special train as it passed through railway stations where his loyal people, gathered on the platforms, might catch a reassuring glimpse of the fine presence seated in the royal saloon. After that the cards could be brought out again and the rubber continued. Interest in the game might for the moment flag as the King, amused at the ladies’ habit of powdering in public which the use of *papiers poudrés* had made possible, — for to use a powder puff would have been considered indelicate, — stole a paper and broke it on his own nose amidst laughter. Not often did majesty thus deliberately stoop to the ridiculous. Then the cards would be resumed, and before they reached Euston deft hands would have removed the last traces of the prank which the King had played upon his royal complexion, and he would have paid

<sup>1</sup> E. Legge, *King Edward in His True Colours*.

his debts out of an enormous roll of £5 notes which he carried in his pocket. And five minutes later the handsome, well-groomed figure would be acknowledging with immense dignity the salutes of his loyal subjects as he drove in his carriage and pair to Buckingham Palace. The frontiers of work and play must always be ill-defined for a king. Circumstances might even make it necessary that the after-dinner leisure of a country-house party should be interrupted, as when the King from his "Court at Wynyard" — Lord Londonderry's stately North of England seat — late one night presided at the Council which declared his host Lord President. And wherever he might be, the official boxes with their dispatches to be read in the midnight hours followed him about, sombrely reflecting the increasing gravity of the state of Europe.

There were dark shadows to the splendor of the Court, as there were also in the prosperity of the country. The Socialists were becoming a political power, threatening to undermine the thrones of Europe, and the Kaiser might well envy the Olympian detachment of Pierpont Morgan, far more regal than many professional kings, who, when the Emperor asked him what he thought about Socialism, said: "I pay no attention to such theories." King Edward would not have put a question like this to his old American friend. Look after persons, and principles will look after themselves — in this way the new Force might be harnessed and made useful. "That was a real low form of cunning on Your Majesty's part, sending to ask after Keir Hardie's stomach ache," Lord Fisher said one day, to be badly tossed as the King went for him "like a mad bull." "You don't understand me. I am the King of All the people. No one has got me in their pockets, as some think they have. . . ." And then King Edward mentioned names which Fisher does not repeat.

Edwardians would not have found it difficult to fill in the

blanks. Sir Ernest Cassel, in his last years the King's most intimate friend, a man with a financier's imagination and a financier's morals, having the foresight to amass an enormous fortune and yet being completely taken by surprise in August 1914 and stranded in Switzerland with only a few hundred francs. "The cleverest head in England," said the King of him, by this judgment showing what kind of ability he most admired. The Marquis de Soveral, another "dangerous fanatic" against Germany in the opinion of Princess Henry of Pless, born a Cornwallis-West and able to see both sides of the international picture — he and Cassel, she thought, should be deported. These were the most prominent amongst "the court pests" whom Lady Oxford thus generically describes, though her "E," the man of infinite curiosity and discretion, "slim with the slim, straight with the straight," may be easily enough identified. Party politicians disliked a courtier who refused to come out into the open, meanwhile advising the King how best to stand up against their continual encroachments on his prerogative.

Lord Esher was the more unpopular with the Liberals since he professed the true faith himself. If any man had the King in his pocket, it was he. Some believed that the possession of the King's will was shared between him and Lord Fisher. "What pleases me most is the King having sent for you [Lord Fisher is writing to Lord Esher in September 1909] and for the 1½ hours breakfast and afterwards driving with him because as no doubt you know, X. (and some others) started a propaganda against you which fell absolutely flat and it is a rattling good thing the King making much of you in this way as it gets about *and without any question the King now largely moulds public opinion.*" Others recognized this besides Lord Fisher. Blatchford, who at about the same time was asked by Lord Roberts to appeal to workingmen for military service against the coming war, replied that it was quite useless, for "the only man who could gain the attention of the country was the King."



King Edward died before this eventuality became necessary, which in any case would not have appealed to Fisher, who rather despised soldiers and had a pet scheme for making the army a branch of the navy. But always at hand stood the King's task of helping the servants he trusted when their enemies in Mayfair, or Westminster, were at their heels. His bidding Lord Curzon to lunch at Buckingham Palace immediately on the ex-Viceroy's return from India prevented society giving him the cold shoulder prepared as a punishment for his viceregal bumptiousness. Fisher, also, had many enemies amongst sailors, politicians, and even courtiers. Things were whispered into the King's ear — that he talked too much and went so far as boasting that the King would "see him through anything." These stories did not seem so improbable since Lord Fisher's nicely calculated indiscretions at Court caused it to be said that he forgot he was not on the *Hard* at Portsmouth. He might suggest dancing after dinner, and Lord Pembroke, much to his disgust, would himself have to take up the carpet; once at a luncheon party Fisher asked and actually obtained permission from the King to give a song. But the King sent for his First Sea Lord and told that naval genius he was Jekyll and Hyde, — Jekyll at the Admiralty, but Hyde in society, — and if the Prime Minister gave him his *congé*, he as a constitutional sovereign could n't resist. . . .

Fisher had little difficulty in showing such stories to be simply gossip, and then, Lord Fisher tells us, the King, with this off his mind, "smoked a cigar as big as a capstan bar for an hour afterwards," talking of everything from China to Peru.

But the Admiral did not always come off so lightly. Once, driving with the King alone, he saw a lady whom he thought was in America. Utterly carried away by his feelings, he stood up and waved, and the angry King became still angrier at Fisher's excuse that he had forgotten all about him. But when beauty, American beauty, was in question

— and Fisher had a sailor's eye — the King was not implacable, and the incident ended by his saying: "Well, find out where she lives and let me know." A royal command to dinner for the lady was not the only mark of the King's favor, for her little girl had a sovereign from his hand. He had always followed the good old Victorian habit of tipping your friends' children. Many years had passed since at breakfast one morning he slipped gold into the hand of Henry Chaplin's son for having strewed dried peas between the sheet and blanket of his father's bed — young people who played practical jokes were to be encouraged, even at the expense of filial respect. His royal dignity could also make allowances for the naïveté of youth, and when he asked a guest at one of his grandchildren's parties whether he wanted anything, and got the reply, "More jam, King," the King saw that he had it. But the callow nephew of one of the King's intimates, who on being introduced offered his hand with a "Hullo, Eddy," received a crashing box on the ear.

The Man in the Street, to whom the King was "good old Teddy," would have been delighted had he ever heard how the youngster received old-fashioned chastisement. That Edwardian generalization, whose place in a mass-production age has been taken by the Working Classes, reacted to the pageantry, but was too remote to be affected by the awe, of kingship. The Man in the Street could hardly be expected to realize that beneath the courtiers' smooth manners beat hearts which were always ready to jump at the thought of anything going wrong, that in the rarefied atmosphere of Windsor Castle everyone was "ill at ease," even at matins in the Private Chapel. To relax might mean a moment of self-forgetfulness — Lord Fisher alone could claim the immunity of the cap and bells — and this in turn might cause the drying-up of the royal wellspring. From such fears only the grand seigneur was naturally exempt, and a well-founded, if not true, story went how the Duke of

Devonshire, most simple and gloriously casual of men, once actually forgot that the King was dining with him at Devonshire House and had to be dug out of the cardroom at White's.

For the rest of the world, even for the young and beautiful, there could be no forgetting. The King remained the King, whether in the council chamber or on the croquet lawn. He liked this gentle game, especially at Moulton Paddocks<sup>1</sup> after an exciting day's racing on the Heath, and he liked playing against someone who possessed no tiresome skill. The Duchess of Sermoneta, half English, half Roman, wholly lovely and utterly unpractised with the mallet, made the ideal opponent. Every evening after the races she would play with him, "missing the easiest hoops and therefore keeping him in the best of tempers." But one day she lost patience, grew desperate as only a croquet player can, and gave a mighty smack at her ball. The story is best told in her own words: "It flew right across the ground, straight through the right hoop (I did n't even know it was the right one) and continuing its glorious career, hit the King's ball straight into the rose bushes. But by the icy stillness that prevailed I realized that never, never was such a thing to happen again."

The eyes of the royal autocrat extended beyond the rose-bushes of Moulton Paddock, beyond his castle walls; and those privileged to be in the King's circle had always to beware of doing the desperate things of which the Duchess's gesture with the mallet stood as the type. Amongst his antipathies were ballooning, for instance, and gambling (in which he did not include bets on the race course, or bridge at £5 the hundred), and for women the descent into the arena, though it should be rather called the mud, of politics — a fall worse than that of Eve. She could eat her apple in peace, for the old Victorian prudery had vanished; and

<sup>1</sup> Sir Ernest Cassel's Newmarket residence.

though the Duchess of Devonshire, greatest of the ladies in the King's set, her view of morals symbolized in the fixity of her expression and the stiffness of her *corsetière's* art, stood up gallantly and rigidly for the standards that her years approved if her youth had not exemplified, she fought a losing battle. The word "respectable" had gone by the board. Maud Allan's Salome, who fascinated the Premier, wore no tights, and Lady Constance Richardson, an amateur enthusiast for the oldest of the arts, showed her legs almost to her knees when she gave her *pas seul* in West End drawing-rooms. Change was the very breath of the Edwardian air — the change for which he had stood all through his manhood, and not least in this wider freedom, the emancipation of women. He was their ally. . . .

Yet emancipation did not mean that they should make themselves as like men as possible. When the antics of the militant suffragettes were once discussed in his presence, his only comment was, "Beasts." In spite of the fact that Lady Warwick believed Queen Alexandra disliked her for having brought the King into contact with the new ideas, he did not alter his opinion that woman's business was to please the present and to produce the next generation of men. In his friends who fulfilled these two primary functions his interest was constant and cordial to the verge of fidgetiness. "King Edward sent round twice to say I am doing too much — but I knew more about it than he did," writes the Princess of Pless, touched in the pride of her vocation.

All the same, with an experience in gallantry going back over forty years, he knew a great deal. If he fussed uselessly over young women with child and in consequence self-willed, he could still by a simple compliment make a beauty feel the shyness and delight that come from the knowledge that she is in the presence of danger — experienced all the more keenly because his usual pose might be one of kindly fatherliness. To be able to produce such a thrill, to be able to

pass, by an apparently haphazard word, from the father, almost from the grandfather, to the potential lover, marked him as an extraordinary devotee. And his ideal had not changed. Your adept is catholic in his tastes — and his heart beats alike for the dark, the blonde, the brunette. Had the three waylaid him on Mount Ida he would surely have divided the apple between them. Or, failing that, he would have sat down and talked to them, as in the butts on a Scotch moor, until he had forgotten the grouse and they their rivalry in beauty, desiring only to amuse him by their talk. And if in the end they had not joined in begging him to eat the apple himself, — for goddesses have surely something of the self-sacrificing nature of their sisters upon earth, and the voracious appetite of a Prince remained with Edward VII as King, — it would have gone to her who possessed, not the brightest eyes, but the liveliest tongue.

The liveliest, not the most unkindly; only one of the ladies with whom he tasted the pleasures of the boudoir had malice in her nature. The others who managed to weave their destiny into his royal life form an adventurous and high-spirited, good-natured and withal modest train. Mrs. George Keppel, the Alice Keppel whom every contemporary memoir praises for her wit, beauty, and resilience, was the last of a line which included many celebrated women and some who are shadows, one with a husband sharper outlined than herself, a Liverpudlian husband whose appealing letters to the Prince were put into the fire — read but unanswered. Mrs. Keppel's skill sometimes failed to disarm the criticism of elderly matrons, who often found themselves her hostess when they had the honor of entertaining the King. But she suffered moralists not too sadly, made no enemies, and retained to the end the affection of the King and the esteem of the Queen. When the private one-horse brougham set him down at her house in Grosvenor Street, King Edward dropped for the moment into a grateful incognito, forgot the

chagrins of his office and the state of his health. The last time he thus escaped was five days before his death, and he appeared so ill after dinner that Mrs. Keppel — the Queen being absent abroad — insisted on his going home to bed.

He was not easy to manage, and Queen Alexandra knew how to be grateful for help in a difficult task. Even at the bridge table Mrs. Keppel's wit did not desert her. The story goes how one evening, when the cards were treating him badly, he scolded and complained that his partners declared cheap suits — this was in the days before auction bridge — and never gave him a chance of making a declaration on his own account. Mrs. Keppel, with nothing in her hand, thereupon left it to him to declare. The King, as deprecatingly as was consistent with his majesty, said, "I don't know what you will say to it, but I make 'No trumps,'" and, as dummy, laid his cards on the table. Mrs. Keppel saw there was not a trick in his hand and that they would surely suffer the disaster of a grand slam. But her readiness saved her: "All I can say, Sir, is: God Save the King and preserve Mrs. Keppel." It was trenching on dangerous ground, for jokes of this kind were not always well received; anything in the least appearing to make light of royalty was avoided by the careful courtier. But Mrs. Keppel's courage served her well, and the loss of seven tricks only elicited laughter from the King.

Did he sometimes wonder where this weakness, or this strength, in his nature came from? Was it an inheritance of his hot Hanoverian blood? Or had the Prince Consort not been quite the conjugal paragon history painted him? The little tiffs between his parents may have been due simply to the clash of two strong characters, or to the irritation of the Prince at an anomalous position, or still more probably to the jealousy of the Queen. In any case the King, always curious about his family history, of which his knowledge was extensive, announced his intention one day at Eton,

when Princess Daisy of Pless said at lunch that she was going over in the afternoon to call upon her Granny, of going too. If the Princess was put out at this august addition to an afternoon family call, Lady Olivia Fitzpatrick, a splendid relic of the Prince Consort's and Queen Victoria's generation, was not. And when the King, in gentle chaff, asked her if it were true his mother had sent her away from Court for trying to flirt with his father, she answered in the proper vein: "I cannot quite remember, Sir. Most likely I wanted to flirt with your father — he was a very good-looking man. Besides, all the Coburgs inherited a roving eye. How humiliating it would be for a man to think that no woman ever wanted to flirt with him!" "I doubt, Lady Olivia," the King said, "whether that is a form of humiliation on which you or I could pose as an authority."

Admittedly the relations between men and women formed the most difficult knot to untie in the whole chain of morals. But there was another which Edwardian prosperity had helped to form, until it stood out, menacing and ugly, a palpable danger to society. King Edward saw the gambling in the West End clubs and grieved. It was one thing, however, to see the evil, another to scotch it. High play prevailed at White's, his club in far-off days until he broke its rules about smoking and founded the Marlborough for himself and his friends. Now he decided to intervene. To summon an eminent member of the club and express displeasure at the gambling that went on there was easy. But it only had the result of sending back that Hampden of St. James's Street straight to the card room, where, to the astonishment of the members at seeing so blameless a man in such a place, he joined in the game which his sovereign wished to scotch, not because he cared for gambling, — indeed he detested it, — but as a gesture to show that he upheld the independence of White's against royal interference.

Being a reformer was thankless work. Powerful as the

King was, able to influence public opinion, shaping the future as decisively as any man in the world, he could not even get one of his own messengers to try to break himself of the habit. "I'm sorry to hear of the tales of your gambling, Colonel Stewart; why don't you give it up?" he said to "Bim" Stewart, a well-known Edwardian man about town, whose prefix was an abbreviation of the *bimbashi's* rank he had earned in the Levant, only to receive the reply: "Well, Sir, there's not much of a livelihood to be got out of carrying your bags about." In other ways, too, it was thankless. He had consistently striven to break down the complacent snobbery of the mid-Victorian era. Yet the Royal Yacht Squadron blacklisted one of his friends, a man who had spent a fortune on his cutters. The Jockey Club jibbed at another, and the Travellers' disregarded his plainly expressed wish that Cecil Rhodes would be found to possess the qualifications it demanded of its candidates. But he accepted philosophically such failures to see his friends absorbed into the social elements of the time. As Lord Morley said of him when the King, a day or two before his death, tried in vain to secure the appointment of Lord Kitchener as Viceroy of India, "he pressed his suit without an atom of anything like overweening insistence — never for an instant did he cease to be kindly, considerate, genial." But the atmosphere was torrid for all that.

Yes, much was awry in society. Sometimes scandals could be nipped in the bud, or at least kept hidden. When the King heard that the young and beautiful American who had become Duchess of Marlborough wished to obtain her marital freedom, he is said to have declared that he would have no scandal in the House of Lords during his reign. There were worse scandals which threatened to disturb the surface of high society, dark doings said to have their origin in obliquities that are abhorrent to nature. The blackest of these was the disappearance, if rumor



counts for anything, of the Irish Crown jewels, which coincided with the King's visit to Ireland in 1907. Their official custodian, Sir Arthur Vicars, Ulster King-at-Arms, disclosed four days before the arrival of the King and Queen that the regalia of the Order of St. Patrick had been taken from the strong rooms — they had been missing, indeed, for nearly a month, and he declared he was at his wit's end to know what to do about it.

No bombshell could have exploded more inconveniently, nothing have served to move a meticulous monarch to more awful and righteous anger. No question here of hushing up a scandal; it was a monstrous business which must be sifted to the bottom. There could be no doubt that someone in the Herald's office knew about the theft, which clearly was not the work of mere professional cracksmen, and surmises sprouted in that congenial Irish atmosphere until the most forbidding rumors reached the clubrooms of St. James's. The jewels, the knowledgeable asserted, had been worn at orgies by men who did not deserve the name, the Diamond Star of the Grand Master had blazed on the front of the high priest of these wickednesses. An ugly affair.

The King's wrath descended upon the head of his Viceroy, pious and well-meaning Lord Aberdeen. To make matters worse for this worthy Liberal peer whose passion it was to cultivate friendliness with all mankind, the name of his son and heir crept into the story, and so insistent did the gossip become that Mr. Augustine Birrell, the Secretary for Ireland, ultimately had to deny from his place in Parliament that Lord Haddo was implicated. Besides destroying the amenity of the King's last visit to the land which had fascinated him all his life, the feebleness of the efforts subsequently made to clear up the mystery showed either that the Viceregal Government wished the thing to remain one, or else it was in its dotage. During the ensuing

months, Lord Aberdeen experienced from his King and master the unpleasant process which Saint-Simon, writing of cases when Louis XIV vented his displeasure upon ministers, describes as the washing of the head. The King went on fuming until December, when the affair was five months old and nothing had been done.

He continued to watch it with angry irritation, and when in January a Commission of Inquiry was appointed, with the proviso that its proceedings should be held in private, he insisted that they should be thrown open to the public and the press. The Commission reached the obvious conclusion that Sir Arthur Vicars had not exercised due care in the custody of the key of the safe. It left unanswered the vital question, which stimulated the imagination of the world — the question, Who stole the jewels? Mr. Asquith then applied his legal mind to the case with no better success, and the thing still remains one of the unsolved mysteries which are shrouded in the Celtic twilight that broods over Dublin no matter whether Saxon or Gael sits on the banks of the Liffey.

These spots on the Edwardian sun were invisible to the public, who saw life from the pavement. Viewed from this situation, the King's power over society appeared as inevitable as the unfailing ease of court ceremonial. To those behind the scenes, however, the *décor* of the King's life was no order of nature, but the result of attention to detail and hard work on the part of everyone from King Edward himself to Mr. Chandler, the master of his wardrobe. Like his ancestor Alfred, the King looked after the minutes and wasted none if he could help it. So carefully were odd moments garnered that caches of his photographs, complete with pencils, were placed at convenient spots in the Palace, so that when the King found himself with a little time on his hands he could then and there autograph some for Chandler, who also looked after the gifts department, to add to his store.

Whether the proverb of the man and his valet applied to Chandler's private opinion of his master we know not — his discretion remained proof against the temptations of publicity. But we do know that he was more than an efficient wardrobe master who saw to it that all the royal suits and uniforms were laid out on a large table, complete to boots, jewels, and decorations, ready for the day's routine. No man suffered more from the King's displeasure, and the vibrant voice, swearing mightily at the unperturbed valet as clothes were changed, sometimes carried to the ears of the gentlemen of the Court, who also were aware that this was merely a safety valve for the fatigue and annoyance incidental to the delightful profession. Such storms soon passed, and the invaluable scapegoat might soon afterwards hear his master shouting for him as he showed some private and not too grand visitor his Rembrandts, drawing attention to "his favorite work of a *genre* character" until he forgot the rest of the things he ought to say. But Chandler was an encyclopædia and he knew the proper patter better than his master, whose verbal memory had always been unreliable. When the King talked politics, he never got out of his depth, however sharp the intelligence, or the cunning, of his interlocutors; it was otherwise with the finicking niceties of art criticism. Yet Mr. Cole, the chronicler of one such scene, an artist who managed to obtain sittings from the King through Chandler after Lord Knollys had turned down his application, found his royal sitter critical enough of his own portrait: "Is not the beard a little too rough? The eyes, make them bluer; I should like them to look blue." As an old man he still kept a pleasing vanity.

In spite of care, forethought, zeal, the order of the Court — symbolizing the higher order of which it is an earthly reflection — often trembled on the verge of chaos. There were so many things to go wrong. Queen Alexandra never really learned the virtue of punctuality. It was an accident when

she made the procession to open Parliament ten minutes late ; a string of her pearls caught and broke upon the handle of the state coach, and the high business of the state had to be delayed whilst footmen and pages forgot their bravery in groping for the precious things in the Palace porch. That time she was guiltless, but how often did she fail to recognize that punctuality is the politeness of queens as well as kings, and kept her lord fuming until she appeared serenely radiant, unravaged by time — a miracle her envious sisters of lower degree attributed to enamel, an explanation as absurd as those which seek to rationalize the miraculous always are. The few privileged to see her enjoying the wind and rain of the Solent knew it to be ridiculous. And since towards the righteous anger of the waiting husband she presented an impenetrable and Pauline submission, his fits of choler, like the lightning stroke which chooses its victims at haphazard, might find the most improbable conductor, and the Gentlemen of the Household, whom it pleased the King to see assembled in the Hall whenever he publicly left the Palace, could feel relief when the storm had passed over their heads. It was at Portsmouth once that the Sovereign, thus venting his griefs upon his consort, emerged on a ceremonial occasion to find himself confronted by a Guard of Honor, placed awkwardly across the exit which he had not been expected to use, so that he walked right into a subaltern standing in the rigid attitude of the royal salute at right angles to his path. "Damn you, get out of my way," he said. Not every young man, holding the King's commission, could claim to have been honored by an expletive from the lips of Majesty.

The story may be quoted by the license that allows biographers the same liberty of putting their eyes to the keyhole enjoyed by courtiers, for the King's Gentlemen were observed to peep like this in order to be aware of the precise moment when deputations should be admitted to the Audience Chamber. These came from all over the globe to the King

of All the Britains, anxious to speak with the master of that world, to put their grievances before him, or more simply to pay him their respects, and the King never appeared to greater advantage than when he thus sat literally on his throne. His reception of the Basuto chiefs, who laid before their overlord the fears they felt at their subjection to the Dutch which a united South Africa would entail, impressed itself on one of his suite as a striking instance of his kingcraft. The Basutos, who stupidly wore European clothes and so deprived themselves of all the moral authority which their native chieftain's dress would have given them, stated their case — a strong one. The King's reply only pleased them moderately well, and at its conclusion they stood unsatisfied and anxious to press their suit. But the King, after he had read his answer, sat very erect and stiff upon his throne and looked them straight in the face. "Chiefs, I have spoken," he said, and their only possible answer to this finely studied gesture was to make obeisance and withdraw.

The Household-in-Waiting could never tell when things would get out of gear. A deputation sent by a blundering police sergeant to a wrong door of the Palace might threaten international complications — as when Koreans and Japanese, then very much at variance, became inextricably mixed on the stairs of Buckingham Palace, the confusion growing worse when a bevy of County Councillors swept along, burly giants mingling with the little yellow men who were galvanized by an ant-like hatred. Or a notability might be late, as when the Patriarch of Antioch failed to appear at the time arranged and the King remained waiting for this unpunctual third pillar of Christendom whilst his suite, one by one, drifted away, until at last only a Gentleman Usher, Sir Lionel Cust, was left alone with a fidgety and bored monarch, unable to interest himself in anything and suffering the ennui that, as a French Princess remarked very many years ago, can only be felt by the well-born.

Irritation was bad enough — the annoyance at those who bungled in the steps of the *quadrille d'honneur* at a Court Ball, through which the King walked with an inimitable grace, or the boredom that fell upon him when Sir Walter Parratt, his Master of the King's Musick, set the infant prodigy, Franz von Vecsey, to play Bach's "Chaconne" at a state concert, a woeful solecism against which could be fairly put another producing malicious joy, when two sopranos, contrary to all Court rules, were commanded for the same concert, and the sofa traditionally reserved for the performing diva had to hold up a pair of queens, Melba and Mary Garden, both heavy with rage. The absence of applause at a state concert emphasized the ennui to which this sort of music making is too often the accompaniment. The greatest artists finished their arias, their fireworks, their brilliant cadenzas, amidst a profound silence, and the only mark of approbation would be Queen Alexandra's slow placing of the fingers of her right hand in the upheld palm of her left. Music lover as he was, King Edward had always felt a lukewarmness towards these traditional Court functions which palled the more as he grew old and hard to please.

Irritation was bad — but much worse the emptiness of spirit that sometimes came upon him as he waited for a more august visitant than any he had yet received. As a rule he conquered this despair which brings to all the message that the kernel of life is bitter with the bitterness of death, finding escape from dark thoughts in the living book of men and women, his constant reading for fifty years with never a face forgotten — another trait this which Louis XIV set amongst the indispensable attributes of kingliness. The clash of wit, so long as it remained free from dialectical acidity, still drew him. It amused him, whilst he kept his own humor in reserve as befitted a King, to hear others strike off conversational sparks, to pit talker against talker, to have Lord Redesdale and Lord Fisher sit one on each side of him and

to see who could talk down the other. Yet at times his zest seemed to fail, the book to lose its savor; then his spirit retreated within itself and he sat lost in thought, silent, ceasing to play with the bangle on his wrist, hardly conscious of the cigar which the doctors repeatedly told him he must not smoke if he valued his days. The infinite charm of Babylon had begun to pall.

Towards the end, men noticed that he often remained pre-occupied even on the race course or at the coverts. Such periods might be broken by a cry of anxiety as his weakening health magnified the dangers surrounding his country, his dynasty, and civilization itself. "My son will reign — my grandson never!" he is said to have exclaimed in one fit of weariness and depression. More often he pursued less general lines of thought; he would ponder on the wealth of his friends, or on something that his unfailingly observant eyes had noticed, until he came to the surface with a remark requiring all the quickness of his lords and gentlemen to establish its place in the context. When the King one day, returning to London from a house party, ended a period of rumination in the royal saloon with the remark, "He is ver-ry young to hold such a responsible post," the ingenuity of the suite was baffled. Who was it? Winston Churchill, the baby of the Ministry, the Bishop of London, the baby of the Episcopal bench? "Yes, Sir," replied one, "but . . . to whom is Your Majesty referring?" "To the butler, of course," he snapped out — and the courtier's flair could not decide whether the King, on that occasion, had kept his humor in reserve.

## XX

### STORM AND SUNSET

THE European unrest, with its storm centre now ominously placed in the Balkans, was anxiety enough for a man in failing health. Alarming too was the growth of faction at home, threatening to Balkanize English politics, to set class against class, to substitute passion for the old reasonableness, to start the country on an era of financial extravagance when dangers menaced the very existence of England and the Empire, dangers demanding economy in everything that did not look directly towards national defense. As the King observed the deterioration, one man in particular stood out as blameworthy. Mr. Lloyd George excited no iota of the sympathy which King Edward had felt for many ardent radicals, from Gambetta to Mr. John Burns, and the royal strictures upon the politician's methods surpassed those which Edward VII, as Prince or King, made upon any of his contemporaries except the Kaiser, the man Mr. Lloyd George afterwards wished to hang.

For Mr. Lloyd George had hardly entered upon office when he began to show the indiscipline of a restless and essentially destructive mind. The fact of his being a cabinet minister did not make him resign the letters of marque he had taken out as a private member in opposition, and he remained a privateer ranging over the whole sea of domestic and foreign politics, firing broadside after broadside at the House of Lords — bulwark of the Babylon which the Party of Progress was to replace by the New Jerusalem, that city on the non-conformist hill towards which Mr. Lloyd George climbed



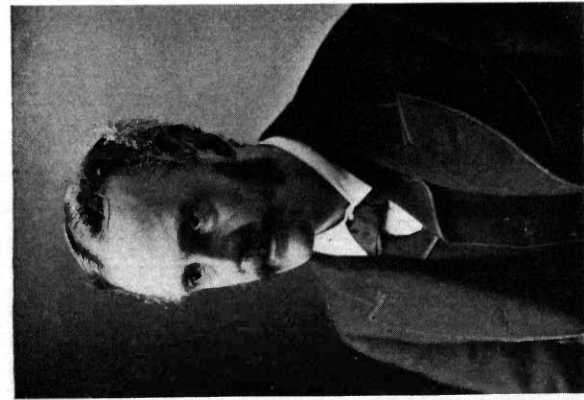
in many a peroration — and flying signals of international peace in answer to the grim preparations going on behind the Heligoland Bight. In the dazzling records of political opportunism which carried him to the Premiership, Mr. Lloyd George trimmed his sails to many winds. But those which blew from the lobbies of the Upper House enabled him to make the first tacks towards the goal of an overmastering ambition.

As the President of the Board of Trade turned his picturesque gifts of ridicule and invective upon the House of Lords, King Edward protested to the Prime Minister, who was too easy-going, or too lazy, to keep his colleague in check. And when Mr. Lloyd George, in one of his public speeches, seemed to wish to drag the Crown into his slogan making, — the issue, he said, was whether the country should be governed by the King and his Peers or the King and his people, — King Edward insisted that his name should be kept out of party politics. Mr. Lloyd George professed profound regret if he had inadvertently offended, and Lord Knollys took the opportunity of momentary contrition to observe, on the part of the King, that “a cabinet minister cannot indulge in that freedom of speech which, if he were a private member, he would be at liberty to gratify.”

The King, as he surveyed the dispute between the Houses from the serener air above party politics, thought that the Liberals had a grievance and ultimately laid before Lord Crewe, the leader of the House, his own scheme for the Chamber's reform that would have put the two parties on a level when it came to a division. But, a King by right of birth, he could not regard with equanimity any attack on the hereditary principle which lies at the root of British conceptions of government, a principle subscribed to by Mr. Lloyd George himself and by those barons of the Labor Party, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and Mr. Henderson, when they followed the old aristocratic fashion of securing the return of their children to Parliament.

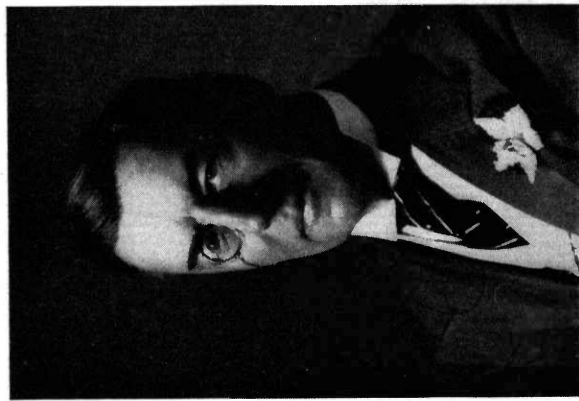
But whatever the King's views, whatever his affinities with Liberalism, and nearly all his closest political friends had been Liberals, — Lord Carrington, Sir Charles Dilke, Lord Randolph Churchill, democrat rather than Tory, Lord Hartington, Mr. Gladstone himself, amongst his immediate entourage Lord Knollys and Lord Esher, — he could not love Mr. Lloyd George. From the first the Prime Minister was unable to prevent his being a thorn in the side of the King whom he served. Then Campbell-Bannerman collapsed after a speech at Bristol — what causes ministers to break down, runs an *obiter dictum* of King Edward's, is not official work, but dinner parties, late hours, and casual speechifying — and his place was taken by Mr. Asquith. Had that scholar and gentleman been able to manage men as he managed words, the subsequent history of English politics might have been very different. But he signed the death warrant of the Liberal Party and prepared the way for his own ultimate ousting when, under the impulse of fear rather than love, he made Mr. Lloyd George, with only two years' experience of office, Chancellor of the Exchequer in the reconstructed Liberal Ministry of 1908. And he also provided for King Edward, as his second most important minister, almost the only man in English public life for whom he had a pronounced antipathy.

If King Edward, as Lady Oxford affirms, was "fond of Henry," he showed great magnanimity. For during the two years which covered the remainder of his life's span the situation at home grew almost as anxious as that in Europe. Mr. Asquith proved no more capable than his predecessor of keeping ministers in order, and the activities of the promoted Mr. Lloyd George became, in the King's eyes, more mischievous than ever. One never knew what he was going to do, or say, next. In spite of the fact that his leader was opposed to female suffrage, Mr. Lloyd George promised to preside at a Woman's Suffrage Meeting at the Albert Hall,



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LLOYD GEORGE



which the King thought showed "an entire absence of good judgment, good taste and propriety," and he declared he would have no more to do with the man than was absolutely necessary. Queen Victoria could not have expressed herself more emphatically.

This was bad enough. Still more wanting in decorum was Mr. Lloyd George's behavior in Germany, which he visited in 1908 to study the system of national insurance, now grown to be the outstanding abuse in the country of its adoption as in that of its origin. There he made flamboyant speeches on the inevitability of Anglo-German friendship and declared to an Austrian interviewer that he was in favor of an understanding between Great Britain and Germany. The King, from Marienbad, watched uneasily his Chancellor of the Exchequer making these spectacular excursions into foreign policy about which he knew absolutely nothing. Such amateurish diplomacy could only undermine the authority of Sir Edward Grey; it could do nothing to prevent the growth of the German fleet. But Mr. Lloyd George then, as subsequently, considered himself to transcend his office — even beginning his official letters to the Sovereign, not as Chancellor of the Exchequer, but as Mr. Lloyd George, a method of address distasteful to the King.

For the first time he saw at close quarters the colossal egoism of the demagogue who has been carried to power on the flood of his own oratory — and the Aristophanic vision was disturbingly unpleasant. King Edward knew that bright phrases about peace created a false security at home and helped to encourage the enemies of England abroad. He became daily more impressed with the dangers that surrounded his country; and the responsibilities of his office, heightened, if that were possible, by the confidence which his people put in him, grew onerous indeed. Yet what was a constitutional king to do if the system provided him with ministers unable to appreciate the gravity of the times?

When Clemenceau gloomily told Mr. Wickham Steed that a European war might be brought about by an imprudence on the part of English public men, some of whom were appallingly ignorant, King Edward underlined the indictment in red ink. "M. Clemenceau is a true friend of his country and ours," he said apropos of this conversation, an opinion he had not always held.

The most ignorant was surely Mr. Lloyd George, who, whilst the threat of a militarist Germany and, what was now almost more threatening, an imperialist Austria hung like a nightmare over Europe, led the party in the Cabinet against laying down the eight battleships which the King and the mass of his subjects considered the minimum for safety. The radicals screamed at the "dishing of social reform by Dreadnoughts," and Mr. Asquith described money spent on the navy, the navy which had enabled Englishmen to humble the proud and to bestow the blessings of the pax Britannica over a good portion of the earth's surface, as "horrible, devastating and sterilizing expenditure." But Admiral von Tirpitz went on building, and when in March 1909 a debate in the House of Commons enabled Mr. Balfour to calculate that by 1912 Germany might possess twenty-one dreadnoughts to Great Britain's twenty, it left the King "very disturbed and angry," even Lord Fisher catching a momentary gust of the royal anger.

Little came to cheer King Edward during the last months of what seemed a brilliant reign. Mr. Lloyd George's Budget of 1909 excited his antipathies, not only for its financial proposals but also for the aggressive methods by which the Chancellor declared their merits. Had the Cabinet in approving it "taken into consideration the possible (but the King hopes improbable) event of a European war? The income tax, which has always been regarded as a war tax, now stands so high for unearned incomes over a certain amount that any great increase would have a

most disastrous effect on land generally, more especially if the war lasted for any length of time." So the King, contemplating an income tax of one and eightpence in the pound on what were now for the first time called ominously "un-earned incomes," wrote to the Prime Minister.

This comparatively minor anxiety of statesmanship gave way to more serious cares when Mr. Lloyd George, always thirsting for the good fight, trailed before the Lords his Chancellor's robes weighted with the obnoxious proposals of that same "People's Budget." If they trod upon it, he believed he could give them a fall. And this master of political tactics, having less reverence for the traditions of the constitution than any man who has attained power in England since Cromwell, took along with him the whole unwieldy liberal Armada, the aristocratic Whigs like Lord Crewe and Sir Edward Grey and "Lulu" Harcourt, the lawyers who love liberal fees, the nonconformists hot against the "beverage" and thirsting only to make the bounds of liberty narrower yet. Everything pointed to a tremendous battle, with much wild shooting that might easily involve the Crown.

The Conservatives declared that the Liberals, under the guise of a Finance Bill which by traditional custom the House of Lords could not reject, were introducing important principles of legislation. The country should be asked to decide whether or not it agreed with them. The Liberals asserted that the House of Lords, in proposing to throw out the Budget, were "taking the first step in a revolution"; to allow such a right would be to give the Lords the power of forcing a dissolution every year when the Budget came before them. The pundits judged the action of the Upper House to be constitutional, or the reverse, each according to his political sympathies, and the King strove desperately, even angrily, to secure the spirit of compromise without which party government becomes impossible. His opinions

were clear and strong, sympathetic for the feelings of the Liberals, whose bills the House of Lords habitually mangled, hostile to the violence of the "backwoodsmen" peers as to that of Mr. Lloyd George and the loose-tongued Liberal left wing. But he exerted his influence in vain. On the last day of November 1909, the House of Lords on Lord Lansdowne's motion threw out the Budget; on December 2, Mr. Asquith moved in the House of Commons that the action of the Lords was a breach of the constitution and an usurpation of the rights of the Commons, and the King, who from his earliest youth had imbibed a respect for the machinery of government as it had been developed by the wisdom of generations in a politically-minded people, looked down in sorrow and in anger upon the spectacle of party strife.

The verdict of the electorate showed how King Edward, in his wish to moderate the violence of politicians, reflected the good sense of Englishmen who have some respect for obstinacy but in their profound mistrust of power include those who show an overmastering wish to exert it. The enormous Liberal majority of four years before melted away. In England, home of parliamentary government, cradle of political liberty and school of political moderation, the Conservatives had a small majority over Liberals and Labor combined. The support of the Celtic fringe in Scotland and Wales only gave the Government a majority of two.

Without Labor and the Irish vote, Mr. Asquith could do nothing. Upon Labor he could rely in the attack upon an established institution. But the Irish vote had to be bought before even the Budget, the People's Budget of which the delivery had lasted over nine months, could be passed. For a moment it looked as if the reality of whiskey would end an unreal situation. The King, a very sick man at Biarritz, learned from Mr. Asquith on April 14 that a crisis might occur at any moment by the Irish Nationalists voting with



the Conservatives. This odd alliance was averted by Mr. Lloyd George's adroit negotiations with Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon. The Irish vote was bought, Mr. Asquith paying as the price, said Mr. Balfour, the dignity of his office. The Englishman at large included in the bill the prestige of the House of Commons, for whose progressive decline in public estimation the years 1909-1910 are a significant date.

But the crisis was only postponed. For Mr. Asquith had already declared for the abolition of the Lords' power of throwing out bills sent up to them from the House of Commons. Since the Lords could hardly be expected to commit hara-kiri, he had no alternative but to draw the Crown into the grisly business. The Premier had publicly stated that he must have "safeguards" to secure that the will of the people should prevail, a euphemism for the handing over by the King to Mr. Asquith of the royal prerogative of creating peers, or, failing this, a definite promise from the King that he would make the several hundred new peers required to out-vote the Conservative opposition. To such proposed usurpations by his Prime Minister King Edward returned no definite answer. How he would have met the situation had he lived must remain a matter of surmise. Mr. Asquith's letter of April 13, advising the King that the necessary steps be taken to ensure that a policy approved by the House of Commons should be given statutory effect in Parliament, burkes the issue, for that majority had been secured not by any support in the constituencies for the Liberal policy, but by the sort of coalition within the House of Commons which England does not love. The King probably never saw Lord Esher's Memorandum, drawn up a few days before he died, which argued from historical precedent that the King need not accept the advice of his ministers so long as he could find others to take their place. This, however, was neither comforting nor helpful; to lose Mr. Asquith and to gain Mr. Lloyd George would have been to escape from the frying

pan only to fall into the fire. The mere suggestion of it, when the Prime Minister put it forward, is said to have caused a tremendous (and the last) explosion of royal wrath.

Besides, kingship must be guided by other considerations than those of mere precedent, and even if King Edward had been twenty years younger and at the same time had commanded an equal personal influence, the confusion inherent in government controlled by demagogues had not yet become sufficiently confounded for any useful action by the Crown against the continued usurpations of the House of Commons, or rather of the Cabinet. In politics things must often get worse before they can get better. A statesman may be practising a wise patience when he watches in apparent passivity the machinery of the state being mishandled, as it has been mishandled since 1910 by what Sir Walter Runciman calls the new science of destruction and suffering, and the King of England, who plays a longer hand than any party leader, needs therefore a patience all the greater.

All his life King Edward had been familiar with death, and now that the time had come to resign his kingdom, which, for all its chagrins, had proved beyond imagination sweet, he offered a kingly and Christian resistance. Religion was part of the texture of his life, inseparable from the awe shed by the mystery of kingship. In spite of a complete absence of bigotry, — "I do not mind what religion a man professes," he once said, "but I distrust him who has none," — King Edward was no Christian merely in the outward forms which Protestantism has pared down to a minimum. As a young man we have seen him touched by the influences of the Oxford Movement, desirous of becoming a more frequent participant in the sacrament of the altar, prepared to think insufficient the biennial, or triennial, communions which the example of his parents, if not the dictates of the Church of England, enjoined. Then he came under Dean Stanley's

influence, or rather each came under the other's: the Dean, who went unwillingly to Egypt and Palestine with a headstrong and, as he believed, Philistine Prince, being somewhat illogically surprised at the almost religious reverence shown by the members of the suite when in the young man's presence, — to the extent of only speaking with one another at the royal table above their breath, — but soon capitulating to the Prince's charm and, less willingly, to his mysterious dignity; the Prince, on his side, regarding the Dean as his spiritual director, so that when he and his Princess were to make their communion together at Sandringham for the first time, he invited Stanley to be the celebrant. The Dean was touched by the request and went through the service the evening before, explaining its meaning to the Princess, who, as a member of the Evangelically Reformed Church, might have difficulty in appreciating wherein the English branch of the One and Indivisible Church and that on which she had fledged her religious wings agreed and differed. The fact that Stanley's views had latitude but no longitude must have tended to keep the Prince's own religious chart unplotted at a critical time in his life and may have helped to bring about the toleration or, as many declared, the partiality he showed towards Rome.

Certainly neither Prince nor Princess possessed the stout Protestant fibre which ran through the characters of the Queen and Prince Albert. The Princess had no sixth sense enabling her to detect sacerdotalism, the Prince no solid prejudices against the other branches of the great Christian tree. The inner meaning of that tree remained veiled, as must always be the real inwardness of life and truth; it was not the business of a prince to peer at its mysteries with theological eyes. Yet none the less religion stood for them both as a natural and a supernatural force, binding together in the original sense of the word families and society, giving a meaning to otherwise meaningless and cruel accidents, as

shown by the emotion of Prince and Princess when their infant son, who only lived a few hours, was admitted into the Christian family which does not know death. It was a thing, too, justifying subordination and the universal obedience imposed upon mankind, going so far as to persuade them to be sponsors at the baptism of Hakim, the black boy they had brought back from Egypt, who was christened in Sandringham Church. But Hakim showed that the Egyptian nature had not changed in the centuries since that people had been the only provincials in a Christian Roman Empire to welcome the invading Moslems. He was not a satisfactory convert. He borrowed and broke the Prince's gun, had a taste for personal adornment with the belongings of others, and in the end, no child of grace, disappeared from the stage on which a freak of fortune had for a time placed him.

The Prince retained the homely amplitude of belief which Dean Stanley taught. Perhaps it was this which prevented him from reacting, master of pageantry as he was, to the charm of ritual which retains in its holy amber niceties of dress and deportment going back to the etiquette of the ancient world, even to the protocols of the Pharaohs. But a King can no more be an antiquarian than a theologian, and, whatever his reverence of mind, he regarded ritual with flaccid eyes, Sir Charles Dilke actually observing him at the Requiem for the Tsar Nicholas I go to sleep standing, — the Orthodox Church does not love chairs, — his taper gradually turning round and guttering on the floor.

That the Prince of Wales should attend a Greek Mass excited no particular misgiving amongst his future subjects, who believed that the Orthodox Catholic Church has remained free from the errors clinging to their own parent stem of Rome. When he attended Roman Masses, whether for the marriages or the funerals of his friends, it was another matter, and the rumor that the Prince was a Papist sometimes made the pulse of Victorian Evangelical England beat

the faster. Scantiness of evidence may be an advantage in matters about which men feel much and think little, and before the Prince was thirty this Roman label had already been affixed to him. Yet, if to have no horror of the Pope is the first step towards Rome, the Prince took it in 1859 when he was only eighteen. As he progressed through life and associated with members of the houses of Bourbon and Braganza, he could hardly help being impressed by the poise and stability which Catholicism gives to kings and princes in their worldliness. It was through these brothers and sisters in royalty that the Prince of Wales, when in *villeggiatura* on the Riviera, came to know and appreciate the charms which may lie beneath the *soutane*. He first met Father Bernard Vaughan at Cannes. Wishing to hear the eloquence of the preacher whose fame had reached his ears, and habitually thoughtful for the feelings of others, he sent his equerry to ask the Jesuit Father whether he would object to his presence at the next Sunday's sermon, which was to be on the Magdalen. Father Vaughan affected surprise at the question. How, why, could he object? When the equerry replied a little tactlessly that the Prince feared he might be nervous before so many royalties, the answer came, magnificent and histrionic: "I am accustomed to preach as in the presence of the King of Kings and shall not be made nervous by the presence of anyone else whomsoever."

The Prince attended the service, was impressed by the preacher's manner, and thought the matter so good that he asked for the notes of the sermon. None had been made, for Father Vaughan, just like the Prince, never wrote out what he was going to say. Now, yielding to the royal wish, he set it down on paper, and the end of it was that a sermon by a Jesuit was printed and published through the impulse given by the heir to a Protestant throne. Father Vaughan, a man of birth, talents, and the world, reformer, orator, thereafter often had the Prince amongst his congregation, and the

Jesuit became a frequent visitor at Marlborough House and Buckingham Palace, all these things offering occasions for the busybody to put 2 and 2 together and make them into 22. In addition to being charmed by Father Vaughan's mellifluous oratory, the King found his knowledge of men and things in Manchester and other towns of the North Country very useful to him when he visited those parts of his kingdom, and it is said that the royal favor only began to cool when Father Vaughan, whose pleasure as well as duty it was to preach, took the slums as his text when not in the pulpit and gave offense by his frankness of speech.

Still, Bernard Vaughan made only a subsidiary character in a preëxisting myth which, like all its kind, grew more plausible with the accretion of time. Any Englishman with cosmopolitan tastes and a pleasure-loving temperament is liable to be regarded as a crypto-Catholic by his more insular and puritanical compatriots — much more so the Prince of Wales. King Edward's emphatic distaste for the aggressively Protestant Declaration he had to make on his first appearance in his Parliament put both parties on the alert, and so they remained throughout his reign. The Catholics saw, or thought they saw, other things to strengthen their hopes, the Protestants their fears. Meticulous about his own churchgoing, — and, whatever he might do abroad, in England he naturally always attended the Anglican services, — he liked others to be the same. Once humorously chiding De Soveral for his laxity, he pointed out how particular the Roman Catholic Gentlemen of his Household were in carrying out their religious duties. They went regularly to Mass, as all good Catholics should. "Only because you make them, Sir," said De Soveral, always able to sail nearer the wind than most courtiers. The King might well laugh, but to those who looked upon Rome as an active enemy such insistence seemed almost too fair.

Little tendentious stories dovetailed into one another:

how the King easily became bored if the service were the least prolonged, such taste for liturgical brevity smacking of Rome and showing too no partiality for things Anglican; how when he was at Marienbad, as years before at Cannes, he went to Mass; how Queen Alexandra had placed an ex-voto at Notre Dame de la Garde after his recovery in 1902, a marble tablet inscribed "In gratitude for a great favour — Alexandra," which he and the Queen had subsequently been to see together; perhaps most significant of all, how he showed an interest in Lourdes; and the picturesque legend runs of his visiting the holy grotto immediately before he left Biarritz for the last time and placing a nine-day candle at the shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes which was still alight, so zealous Catholics declared, when the King who had lit it was no more. Chronology does not bear out the truth of this story, though, like the others, it has some basis in fact, for the King was a visitor, if not a pilgrim, to Lourdes, hardly more than a fortnight before his death. There was at any rate enough general substratum of evidence to make the Protestant Alliance protestingly nervous, and even, when the King attended the Requiem Mass for King Carlos, to cause misgiving amongst the Anglican Bishops.

So the matter rests, with many Roman Catholics loyally confident that King Edward on his deathbed was received into the Church, and ready to give grounds, if not evidence, for their conviction. Their belief that the King on the afternoon he died sent for the priest in charge of the Catholic Church in Buckingham Gate, who ministered to the members of his flock in the Palace, made an act of faith, and was accepted as a penitent into the fold is not altogether devoid of probability. But admitting King Edward's inner promptings towards Catholicism, which Queen Alexandra with her fondness for the æsthetic and sentimental side of the Church of Rome certainly did nothing to prevent, it is difficult to believe that he was formally received. The complica-

tions that would have ensued in the event of his recovery would have been too great, the damage too serious. Father Cyril Forster, whom legend has named as the instrument in this conversion, is said to have replied to some indiscreet questioner, "I only wish I could tell you," an oracular answer meaning much, or little, according to the predilection of the interpreter. But while prudence stood in the way of King Edward becoming, in theological parlance, a member of the body of the Church, nothing stood in the way of his becoming part of its soul, which could have been accomplished by a mere act of contrition. This, the belief in the goodness of the Christian God and in the sinfulness of man, is sufficient under certain circumstances to ensure salvation, as King Edward knew perfectly well from the sermons Father Vaughan had preached before him on the last four things, and if the act is made in the presence of a priest its virtue is so much the greater.

To the present generation the interest of these rumors lies not so much in their likelihood or improbability as in the general atmosphere they create. Only a King who had the stuff of religion in him could have been their subject. Not that King Edward had a nature which moved in the regions of the unseen; no strain of mysticism ran through that immensely practical mind. Yet apart from the influence of the vocation upon one who believed in it so devoutly, an influence bound to carry him towards the side of authority and away from private judgment, odd little corners occasionally showed, telling of a religious, some would call it a superstitious, sense which accepts tradition as such and is therefore fundamentally anti-Protestant. We have it on record how, when he saw Sir William Colville, his Master of Ceremonies, wearing the jewel of his office, a two-headed Janus, the wrong way about, he sent at once ordering him to correct it, as any displacement, he thought, was a bad omen. The evil eye is real enough to the Neapolitans, most pro-



foundly religious of men and aware in their wisdom of the ubiquity and cunning of the lost Archangel's followers. But what a shock the Prince's gesture would have been to his father's Protestant rationalism!

There are many mansions in Heaven, and King Edward, during the last few days of life, showed an altruism splendid in its refusal to think of himself and in its loyalty to the world he was about to leave. The delightful profession continued to receive every ounce of his failing strength. On the evening of his return to London, Wednesday, April 27, 1910, he went to the opera and paid his last homage to the august art which had always numbered him amongst its devotees.

On both sides of his family he could claim a sound musical inheritance. His father was a cultured amateur, played the organ and improvised gracefully, composed songs and hymn tunes. His paternal uncle wrote and had performed at least one opera. Both were amongst the earliest Wagnerites. His mother, whose accomplishment as a singer was elegantly slight, — she was proud of having been a pupil of Mendelssohn's, — could also transmit the music-making talents of her uncles. The Hanoverians were a musical family, and even poor George III, when otherwise incoherent, could still hum his beloved Handel's tunes. Here was plenty of soil in which to cultivate a taste for music.

But King Edward looked at the art, as he did at everything else, from the high ground of his *métier*. Even if within his power, he would hardly have desired to attain the modicum of skill which enabled his brother to take a place at the desk of the violins in the Royal Amateur Orchestral Society. Neither was music to him an escape from reality in any such solemn sense as is generally shown in the concert room. The only form of music that really pleased his essentially Latin temperament was that which the Italian genius invented and none other has ever quite assimilated. His love was opera, opera embracing everything best in the world it adorned;

the glory of its masters, Rossini, Wagner, Verdi, at their head; the dazzling gifts of great singers in their successive generations, Patti, Albani, Melba, Mario the golden-throated, Tamagno, whose flashing high notes made the great chandelier then hanging from the ceiling at Covent Garden shake in vibrant sympathy, the de Reszkes, Caruso — all set off with the social *éclat* which the Royal Opera provided.

Many are the memories of Edward VII in that lovely auditorium: memories of him as a young man with his Princess experiencing the fashionable *frisson* as he listened to Patti's Rosina, an impossibly apt pupil, as she sang "Una voce poco fa" tricked out in all her own frills ("A very pretty song. Whose is it?") Rossini is said to have asked her when she sang it to him); memories of his enthusiasm for the *Meistersinger*, of his admiration for Puccini, of his unfailing devotion to Verdi. That he preferred above all things the quartet in *Rigoletto* used to be said with a sneer by the intellectuals when anyone admired Verdi at his peril. Now that he is receiving his due, and that beautiful piece of concerted music seems to us in the perfection of its characterization truer to the dynamic life of opera than, for instance, the quintet in *Meistersinger* to which the Edwardian connoisseur gave the palm, King Edward may also be acquitted of Philistinism in this particular instance.

Some of the most magnificent spectacles of the Edwardian Court were to be seen on gala nights when the house would be a blaze of color, brilliant with uniforms, dresses, diamonds, the tiers decorated with roses in a Wagnerian profusion, and no primeval darkness descending upon the audience when the curtain rose. Gala performances formed occasional high points in the cult for opera which King Edward neither neglected himself nor allowed those to neglect who wished to come within the sphere of royal favor. Whilst making attendance at Covent Garden into something like a social obligation, he preferred to sit, not in the royal box, but

in the omnibus box on the lowest tier, where it was possible to drop in at any time and listen in a relative obscurity. Then, if a singer distinguished herself, the Prince might go round at the *entr'acte* and offer his congratulations in person, not forgetting to compliment the diva on her beauty as well as her voice. He knew too what a load of care Wagner has placed upon the conductor, and it requires no very long memory to recall Richter's delight as he returned from the royal box one *Ring* night, repeating in his comfortable German voice: "I have seen the King, I have seen the King."

Thus duty and pleasure combined to make him a habitu , exerting his influence on both sides of the footlights. It meant much to the audience that the chief amongst them was one of the few Kings of England who had ever ruled fashion. And the singers, temperamentally susceptible to atmosphere, after their manner submitting also to the awe that emanates from kingship, as they observed him from the stage listening intently, — he would remain practically still for an hour absorbed in the performance, records Mr. Cole, who studied his subject with a portrait painter's concentration from the stalls, — knew that in the King they had no captious critic but a generous amateur, carrying into every sphere the maxim he once laid down on the vexed question of the international aspects of Freemasonry: "I do not wish to allude to Foreign Lodges with which we are not in accord, but I would ask at any rate we should strive to pick out what is good in them." A Christian as well as a Masonic spirit, typical of Edward VII even in the cantankerous environment of the foyer, where indeed he had always been a stranger. Rarely did he even visit other boxes. Only by exception would the most gracious Carmen who ever fascinated Covent Garden, not too engrossed in her r le to forget the Prince's presence, see him slip out to reappear in Lady Brooke's box; whereupon Lord Brooke (afterwards Lord Warwick), probably

agreeing with Voltaire that the opera is the place where one bores one's self most and enjoys one's self least, would take the opportunity to escape.

King Edward, then, two or three hours after he had returned home, went to Covent Garden. *Rigoletto* was being performed with Tetrizzini, then in her late prime, singing Gilda. He was observed by an old friend, Lord Redesdale, who saw him come in and take his usual corner place in the omnibus box. Throughout a whole act he sat there alone. "Then he got up," Lord Redesdale writes, "and I heard him give a great sigh. He opened the door of the box, lingered for a little in the doorway, with a very sad expression on his face — so unlike himself — took a last look at the house, as if to bid it farewell — and then went out." If only the destiny which sets the stage of the world had a producer's talent, that would have been the last time King Edward ever sat amongst his people, enjoying with them the recreation of the theatre. But it was not so, for two days later, on the Friday evening just a week before he died, he went to see a play at the Comedy. *Alias Jimmy Valentine*, one of the earliest specimens of the American "crook" play to reach London, was his farewell to the stage which in all its aspects had fascinated him for over fifty years.

During those two days he had seen ministers, discussed the constitutional crisis with Mr. Asquith, tried to convince Lord Morley to agree to his nominee for the Viceroyalty of India, handed Lord Kitchener his Field Marshal's baton, visited the Royal Academy, resumed the usual functions of kingship, and seen many members of his family. On the Saturday he went to Sandringham for the week-end with only Sir Dighton Probyn and an equerry. That Sunday he attended Sandringham Church as usual and afterwards went round the gardens which he had created, seeing what had been done in his absence and how the latest improvements he had planned had been carried out. It was cold and

showery, the most dangerous weather for a bronchial patient, but then, as someone said a week later, if many possessed the courage of King Edward there might be more deaths from bronchitis, but there would be thousands fewer hypochondriacs in the world. That evening, at what must have been one of the quietest parties Sandringham had ever known, three of the local clergy were invited to dine, the last of his subjects to have the honor of sitting at his table. Symptoms of acute bronchitis returned the next day, but in spite of that he committed the further imprudence of dining out that evening.

On Tuesday morning it was obvious to his entourage and his doctors that he was seriously ill. But he refused to stay in bed, or even to consider himself an invalid. He continued to give audiences and to transact business of state, though Lord Roberts, who saw him that day, remarked with surprise that he was not smoking his usual cigar. When on the Wednesday Sir Francis Hopwood, the permanent Under-Secretary of the Colonial Office, after the King had been a victim of one of his alarming attacks of coughing, remonstrated with him and said there was not a man in his Empire who would be doing business when he was so obviously ill, the King answered: "No, I shall go on. I shall work to the end. Of what use is it to be alive if one cannot work?"

The next day, May 5, he dressed as usual and gave two audiences. For the moment it seemed as if his extraordinary vitality would reassert itself, and he said: "I am feeling better and intend to fight this. I shall be about in a day." Hitherto the public had known nothing of his illness. The Queen's sudden return from Corfu, the absence of the King at Victoria Station on her arrival, and the issue that same evening of the first bulletin, published on the advice of the Prince of Wales, to which the King rather reluctantly consented, did little to prepare his subjects for the shock which they received thirty-six hours later. King Edward had often

been ill before, and the fact that his condition caused some anxiety indicated nothing exceptionally grave.

On the Friday morning it was evident that he had again lost ground. He tried to smoke a cigar, but had to put it down. He felt, as he said, "miserably ill." Yet even so he would not lay down the threads of his life, and he dressed specially to see Sir Ernest Cassel, as he had previously arranged. At first they thought it impossible he would have the strength to talk, and Cassel was told by telephone that the King was too unwell to receive him. Half an hour later another message came for him to go at once to Buckingham Palace. He was taken first to the Queen, who asked him not to allow the King to tax himself too much. Some time elapsed before an equerry could be found to usher him into the King's presence. Then as he entered the royal sitting room the King rose from his chair and shook hands with his closest, if not oldest, friend. The Sovereign spoke with difficulty and bore an expression of great suffering, as he congratulated Cassel on having brought his daughter, Mrs. Wilfred Ashley, back from Egypt in such improved health. "Tell your daughter how glad I am she has safely got home and that I hope she will be careful and patient so as to recover complete health," he said, himself no good example in such a matter. Cassel had to ask permission to withdraw, so ill did the King appear.

As the day wore on, the symptoms grew worse. Oxygen was frequently administered, but it hardly alleviated the difficulty of breathing, and the King himself realized that the shadow of death lay over him. Yet his courage remained. "I mean to fight it," he said with one of the last flickers of the vital energy which had been his throughout life. He still sat in his chair, a dauntless patient, able still to react to the things of the world, rejoicing when his horse Witch of the Air won the 4.15 race at Kempton.

It was not till he was almost unconscious that he allowed

himself to be undressed and put to bed, and the last words that fell indistinctly from his lips showed that his mind and spirit were unconquered in the determination to fight to the end. He lapsed into coma and unconsciousness. When he was dying, Queen Alexandra summoned Mrs. Keppel to the Palace and herself led her to his bedside, a gesture of infinite nobility. And the Archbishop of Canterbury, whom King Edward had never very much loved, returned to the Palace from presiding at a meeting of the Christian Social Union at half-past nine, saying the last prayer by the King's bedside one minute before he died. In the words of his diocesan, the Bishop of London, "nothing was more Christian than his death."





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